

INTERACTIVE READING EXPERIENCES
OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FATHERS AND SOCIAL FATHERS
AND THEIR 4- AND 5-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

BY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to investigate the patterns of book choice and interaction during book reading sessions of six African American fathers and social fathers and their 4- to 5-year-old children. The fathers/social fathers selected and read aloud expository text, narrative text, and poetry to their children while videotaping the sessions. Data on book choice and interactions was collected from the 18 videotaped observations and pre-and post-study semi-structured interviews. Transcriptions of a subset of videotaped observations were coded for genre and interactions. Frequency counts of genre selection and interaction codes were converted into percentages and examined first by individual father then across the six fathers. Qualitative data obtained from the interviews was an additional source of data. Findings indicated that while each father-child dyad was unique in selection and interaction pattern, when data was collapsed across fathers/social fathers, they read narrative text more often than expository text or poetry. Interview data revealed that choices were often dependent on child interests and/or the father's goals for the child. In terms of interactions, when examining the data across all fathers and genres, the three categories with the largest percentages of interactions were *Label or Comment About Text or Illustration*; *Question About Illustration*; and *Acknowledge Child*. Closer examination of interactions indicated potential affects by genre and the individual goals of a father.

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Scarecrow: Th.D.?

Wizard of Oz: That's...Doctor of Thinkology.

-Wizard of Oz (1939)

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Parental Influence on a Child's Well-Being

Much has been said about the manner in which parents impact children's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Until fairly recently, mothers have been the focus of this research. With the changing roles of two-parent households, the increase in single-parent households headed by fathers, the traditional job description of a father as a financial provider only has been revised. Statistical information from various sources as well as research has documented the changing roles of fathers, some reasons behind that change, and the impact of fathers on children's self-esteem, behavior, and cognitive and academic success.

Unlike the 1950s when only one out of every three women participated in the workforce, the number of women with jobs outside of the home has dramatically increased. From March 1975 to March 2008, the labor force participation rate of mothers with children under age 18 rose from 47% to a peak of 71% (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2010). The United States Department of Labor reported that the number of working mothers has increased for varied reasons. First, more women are returning to work after having children because they were firmly established in the workforce before childbirth. This coincides with the number of women waiting to have children until they've successfully established careers. Secondly, women with employer-provided leave are also more likely to return to work after childbirth, as are women whose income is a substantial portion of total family income. Lastly, mothers are more likely to enter the workforce if they have spousal support, work part-time, or have other "flexibility benefits" like telecommuting, the ability to avoid

overtime hours, and supervisor and coworker support (U.S. Department of Labor: Work and Family, 2010).

Whereas the number of women working outside of the home has increased, the number of males actively employed has decreased due to the economic downturn. Based on May 2012 data, the overall unemployment rate for women was 7.1% compared to 7.5% for men. Among African American men and women, the unemployment rate was even greater. While the unemployment rate for African American women was 10.8% in May 2012, the rate for African American men was 14.4% (Bureau of Labor Statistics: Employment Status of Civilian Population by Sex and Gender, June 18, 2012). Part of the disparity between the number of men and women filing for unemployment benefits is because the recession has taken a harder toll on male-dominated industries such as construction and manufacturing. With the increase in women working outside of the home and higher male unemployment rates, the line between maternal and paternal child-rearing roles has blurred and more men are choosing to become stay-at-home dads. Between 2008 and 2009, the number of stay-at-home dads rose from 140,000 to 158,000. In addition, 7.4% of fathers in two-parent married families with children under 18 stayed at home in 2009 while their wives worked.

The configuration of child-rearing responsibilities has also changed due to the high divorce rates across all ethnic groups. Whereas in previous generations households of married, two-parent households were the norm, blended, cohabitating, and stepfamilies have increased significantly (Pew, 2010). Approximately 50% of new marriages will end in divorce and of that number, 75% of people who divorce will remarry. This means that more than 1 million children are affected by divorce each year. Consequently, about one-third of new marriages form stepfamilies. This means that approximately 52% of people under 30,

and 32% of people over 30, have at least one step relative. For African American families, the number of adults with step relatives is even greater. Approximately 60% of African Americans over 30 have a step relative. Even more revealing, 25% of African American men have a stepchild, compared to 15% of Caucasian men and 7% of Latino men. As divorce rates and number of stepfamilies has increased, so too has the number of extended and intergenerational households. About one in every 10 children in the U.S. lives with a grandparent, and of that 10, a grandparent primarily raised four. Further, 38% of grandparents that provide primary care are male, and 62% are female.

As the configuration of families and the number of mothers in the work force has changed, researchers have begun to focus on the value of paternal and male involvement in children's lives. While there has long been a large research base on the advantages of growing up in with two biological parents in the home (Amato & Booth, 1997; McLanahan, 2003), research on the benefits and advantages of paternal involvement has been slower to evolve. In a study of 25 kindergarten and first-grade children, Culp, Schadle, Robinson and Culp (2000) found that in Caucasian dual-career families, high paternal involvement increased children's feelings of paternal acceptance, thus leading to the development of higher self-concept and esteem acceptance among children. Using the Paternal Involvement and Child Care Index, the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL), and the Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance (PCSA), the researchers also found that parents, who reported a high level of father involvement in childcare, also reported fewer externalizing behaviors for their children.

In another study of children around the kindergarten and first-grade age, Dubowitz, Black, Cox, Kerr, Litrownik, Radhakrishna, English, Schneider, and Runyan (2001) studied

whether the presence of a father or father figure was associated with increased cognitive and social acceptance. The participants in this study were 855 African American and Caucasian children that had a father or father figure that was actively involved in their lives. Based on data collected on the Inventory of Supportive Figures, the Preschool Symptom Self-Report, the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, the CBCL, and the PSCA, the researchers found children who had a positive father or father figure in their lives had higher levels of cognitive development, felt more competent, and had fewer depressive symptoms.

Lieberman, Doyle, and Markiewicz (1999) examined the relationship between the level of attachment children ages 9-14 had to their mothers and fathers and the children's peer acceptance. Using the Kerns Security Scale completed by each parent, a Friendship Qualities Scale completed by each child, and children's nomination of best friend preferences, the researcher discovered that attachment to fathers influenced children's peer relationships. In addition, those peer relationships are more positive, are less aggressive, and exhibit fewer instances of conflict. This in turn, leads to a more positive self-esteem for the students trying to maneuver through the rigors of middle and high school.

Analyzing data from the Baltimore Study that began in 1965, Foley and Furstenberg (1999) expanded a previous study by Furstenberg and Harris (1993) investigating the impact of paternal involvement on the emotional and physical well being of children as they reached adolescence and adulthood. Participants that reported a close relationship with fathers or father figures were almost 50% less likely to experience poor physical health, and 60% less likely to report mental health issues in adulthood than participants without strong paternal bonds. Furthermore, the researchers found no data to support the theory that residential

fathers mattered more than non-residential fathers in adult children's mental and physical well-being.

Using longitudinal data from the National Child Development Study, Flouri and Buchanan (2003) explored the link between fathers or father figure involvement and later mental health. Although father and father-figure involvement did not independently predict mental-health outcomes in adolescence and adult life, the involvement protected against psychological maladjustment at age 16 and against psychological distress at age 33. In the following year, Flouri and Buchanan (2004) published a study investigating the contribution that mothers' and fathers' involvement had on their children's schooling. Analyzing data from the NCDS mental health outcomes when children were age seven, the researchers found that fathers' involvement significantly predicated educational success in later adolescence. In yet another study, researchers found that children with involved fathers, stepfathers, and father figures had a lower frequency of acting out, disruptive behavior, depression, and sadness. Furthermore, father and father figure involvement lowers bullying behavior and helps protect children from more serious instances of violence from peers (Flouri, 2005).

Along with the advantages of paternal and father-figure involvement on the self-esteem, mental, and physical well-being of children, positive male involvement also impacts the cognitive development and academic achievements of those children. In an early study of involved fathers on infant development, Pedersen, Anderson, and Kain (1980) found that six-month-old infants scored higher on the Bayley Scales of Infant Development when fathers were involved in child-rearing activities. In another early childhood study, 20-month-old toddlers were observed, once with fathers and once with mothers, to assess the quality of attachment, problem solving abilities, socioemotional and cognitive development. Results

from this study showed that toddlers had higher problem-solving behaviors and stronger toddler-parent attachment when fathers and father figures were involved in their lives.

As children get older, the positive impact of fathers and father figures upon children's cognitive and academic achievement continues. Children with involved fathers are more likely to enjoy school and have positive attitudes about learning and school in general (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). It stands to reason that if a student enjoys school and has a positive attitude about learning, that they will, in turn, do better in school. Students with strong father and father figure involvement in schools are more likely to earn A's in grades 1 through 12. Consequently, these students have higher grade-point averages and score better on achievement tests (Brokowski & Whitman, 2006; McBride, Schoppe-Sullivan & Ho, 2005; National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). In addition, these students are less likely to repeat a grade, have a lower absentee rate, and are less likely to be suspended or expelled. Finally, the children of involved fathers have higher levels of economic and educational achievement, complete college degrees at a higher rate, and have greater career success (Amato, 1994; Flouri, 2005).

Although the abovementioned studies stress the positive aspects of paternal involvement in children's lives, there is one caveat that is repeated throughout many research articles. While instances of positive paternal involvement are beneficial for children, negative paternal involvement erases those benefits. This is the case whether the paternal influence is a residential father, a non-residential father, or a social father substitute. (Allen & Daly, 2007; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; Foley & Furstenberg, 1999)

Book Interactions and a Child's Literacy Development

Research on family literacy and parent-child book interactions, a common form of paternal involvement with young children, provides us with information to further understand the role fathers have in supporting the development of their children.

While the term “family literacy” was first coined by Taylor (1983) in her doctoral dissertation on reading and writing among Caucasian middle-class families, the definition and the scope of family literacy programs has evolved. In reviewing family-literacy programs, Marrow and Paratore (1993) divided initiatives into three broad categories: home-school partnerships, intergenerational literacy programs, and naturally occurring literacy within families. Researchers found that regardless of the type of family literacy program, children benefit from engaging in literacy activities with family members. Advantages include increased use of print for children and parents (Purcell-Gates, 1996), greater gains on oral language and word decoding measures (Burgess, Hecht, Lonigan, 2002), and increased scores on vocabulary and comprehension measures (van Steensel, 2006).

One of the vehicles by which many families engage in literacy activities with their children is through interactive book reading. For this study, interactive book reading will be defined as “interaction between adults and children that go beyond the traditional routine in which the adult read the text while the child listens” (Justice, Pence, Beckman, Skibbe, & Wiggins, 2005, p. 1). Since adults participating in this study may choose to read more than books with children, the term “text” will be used to include books, magazines, or newspapers. Research has shown when children participate in interactive book reading activities with adults, children score higher than their peers on measures of receptive and other oral language skills (Baker, Mackler, Sonneschein, & Serpell, 2001; Neuman, 1996;

Yaden, Smolkin, & Conlon, 1989). Children also are better prepared to learn to read when entering formal schooling (Burgess, Hecht, Lonigan, 2002; Durkin, 1966; Snow, Burns, Griffin, 1998). The interactive style chosen by parents during book reading sessions can be influenced by the parents' gender (Bauman & Wasserman, 2010; Saracho, 2008; Schwartz, 2004) and/or the text selected (Anderson, Anderson, Shapiro, & Lynch, 2001; Anderson, Anderson, Lynch, & Shapiro, 2004; Pellegrini, Perlmutter, Galda, & Brody, 1990). In addition to research on general issues related to book choice is the importance of using culturally-authentic children's literature during book interactions (Fox & Short, 2003; Mo & Shen, 2003; Purves & Beach, 1972; Sims, 1983)

Purpose of the Study

As presented in the previous section, researchers provide a wealth of information on family literacy, parent-child book interactions, and the importance of using culturally-authentic children's literature. While there is a large body of research on book interactions and mothers, and some research on book interaction with Caucasian and Hispanic fathers and their children, there is virtually no research that looks specifically at the interactive reading practices of African American fathers and other male caregivers of African American children referred to in this paper as social fathers. For the purpose of this study, the term "father" has several meanings. The term "father" will refer to a residential or nonresidential biological or adoptive father. The term "social father" (Bzostek, 2008) will include stepfathers, mother's partners, grandfathers, uncles, older male siblings, or any man fulfilling the paternal role for a child. Although Ortiz (2000) and Saracho (2007, 2008) have studied Latino fathers' book literacy practices and Schwartz (2004) and Anderson, et al. (2001, 2004), have compared fathers' and mothers' interactions in shared book reading and genre

selection, this researcher has found no study that specifically addressed the reading practices of African American fathers and social fathers with books and other forms of text.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the patterns of book choice and interaction during African American father/child book reading sessions. Specifically, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. What texts did African American fathers and social fathers choose to read with their 4- to 5-year-old children and why did fathers and social fathers select these texts?
2. What types of interactions did African American fathers and social fathers engage in during interactive reading with text of their choice?

It was my goal to conduct this study to address the void in the research on the topic of the interactive reading choices of African American fathers and social fathers. As an indirect goal, the researcher hoped participating in this study would encourage fathers and social fathers to increase the amount of time they engaged in reading with their children.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

The goal of this literature review is to explore research on the variety and scope of family literacy programs, the aspects of interactive book reading and the benefits of the practice on children's literacy development, and culturally-authentic children's literature with a focus on African American literature.

Family Literacy

From 1969 to 1978, Heath (1983) undertook a monumental ethnographic study of the "literacy events" of preschool children and their families from three communities in the Piedmont area of the Carolinas. Although not specifically termed *family literacy*, Heath discovered that while families in the Trackton, Roadville, and Maintown communities differed in the types of literacy they engaged in with their preschool children, every family engaged in daily literacy events. The researcher observed evidence of literacy usage when families engaged in reading newspapers, brochures, advertisements, letters, books, church materials, and participated in oral storytelling.

The same year Heath published her findings of children's language and literacy development in the families of the Trackton, Rockville, and Maintown communities, Denny Taylor (1983) is credited with coining the term *family literacy* in her book, *Family Literacy: Young Children Learn to Read and Write*. The term, initially used in Taylors' doctoral dissertation on reading and writing of young children in white middle-class families, was defined as the interrelated literacy practices of parents, children, and other family members in their homes and community. From this perspective, literacy goes beyond school-based achievements and values the wide variety of literacy practices that occur in families

throughout the day. Thus, the definition of literacy was expanded and defined as a function of individual interactions with print within a large range of literacy and personal experiences (Heath, 1983; Morrow & Paratore, 1993; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988).

While Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) focused on the naturally occurring literacy events within families, the term family literacy has also been used to describe pre-determined interventions related to the literacy development of young children and to such programs designed to build the literacy skills of not only the child, but also the adults in the child's life (Handel, 1999). According to Auerbach (1989), many family literacy programs aim to teach parents how to do "school-like activities" in a home setting. From this perspective, family literacy is viewed through the lens of a deficient model. The underlying belief of this perspective is that family literacy programs are needed because low-income families are deficient in literacy practices, parenting skills, and knowledge to support effective child learning (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006). As such, these family literacy programs try to transmit school literacy into homes and generally overlooked other aspects of literacy that occurs daily in the home environment.

Family Literacy Initiatives

Categories of Family Literacy Programs

The multiple definitions of family literacy align with various programs labeled as family-literacy initiatives. When reviewing family-literacy programs, Morrow and Paratore (1993) found that family-literacy initiatives fell into three distinct categories: programs that explored the natural occurrence of literacy within families, home-school partnership programs, and intergenerational literacy programs. At the time of their study, Morrow and Paratore found that family literacy programs focused on home-school partnerships were the

most common. In recent research however, the tide of family literacy research has shifted to include an increase in studies that focus on naturally-occurring literacy in non-school environments. It is this category of family-literacy programs that will begin this section and become the primary focus of this researcher's dissertation study.

Naturally-occurring home literacy. Researchers that study how families use literacy in home, social, and community settings help educators learn from and about families. In a groundbreaking longitudinal study of literacy usage within families, Heath (1983) found literate communities used reading and writing for different purposes. Studying families in three different communities in the southeastern United States, Heath learned that families used reading for a variety of purposes: recreational, social-interactional, instrumental, news-related, conformational, and educational purposes. In the Trackton community, parents were not observed buying many books or modeling reading and writing tasks. Instead, reading was viewed as a public affair in which oral communication surrounded the print. While parents read letters or newspapers aloud and negotiated the meaning of the text with others, rarely were they observed sitting and reading to their children before bedtime or naptime. Preschool children in this community learned to tell stories through oral storytelling and are often praised on how well they could engage and entertain their audience.

In the Roadville community, families encouraged reading and bought books for children as young as 6-months-old. The most common type of reading in this community was the bedtime story. Preschool children were read to before naps, before going to bed, and sometimes before mealtime. In addition, children were often engaged in note-writing activities connected to family celebrations and holidays. Letters were written in the form of conversations and parents' largely motivated children's writing. According to Heath,

“Roadville parents believe it is their task to praise and practice reading with their young children; Trackton adults believe the young have to learn to be and do, and if reading is necessary for this learning, that will come” (p. 234). Finally, in the middle class community of Maintown, families also encouraged reading and bought books for children as young as 6-months-old. In these families however, adults maintained running commentaries about events and objects in books and expanded verbal responses of infants and toddlers into grammatically correct sentences. In addition, preschool children in this community saw book and book-related activities as entertainment. Although the literacy development of children in the low-income, communities of Roadville and Trackton was low, Heath observed parents engaging in many forms of home literacy on a daily basis. While the exposure to various literacy events did not appear to transfer to literacy development at school, children in these communities were continually immersed in literacy and valued reading and writing.

Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) explored literacy usage in four African America urban families. By conducting an ethnographic study of parents and their six-year-old children, and collecting data through artifacts and observations, the researchers discovered that participating families used literacy for a wide variety of purposes and in a wide variety of situations. Parents used reading to explore personal identities and the social, political, and economic circumstances of everyday life. Parents also used reading to make changes in their economic circumstances or to decipher environmental print. Finally, the researchers stressed that family members could be highly literate without having an advanced education in the traditional sense of schooling.

In an early study on culture and family literacy, Delgado-Gaitan (1992) used ethnographic observations and interviews to record parent-child interactions in the home

environments of six Latino American families. The researcher documented that the educational values of Latino American families were shaped by low socioeconomic status and parents low level of formal education in Mexico or the United States. Since parents did not have extensive formal education, their children's education and academic success was important and highly valued by the participating families. Children were considered "buen educado" when they achieved academically and were well-mannered, spoke to others kindly and respectfully, and were helpful to those in need. Parents believed that being "buen educado" expanded children's employment opportunities, helped children become professionals, and reflected the Latino America cultural and community in a positive light. Finally, parent-child dyads participated in interpersonal interactions that involved school-related activities. Although most of the parent-child interactions revolved around homework assignments, parents conveyed their cultural knowledge about school by creating specific times to complete homework and offering support and assistance to children.

In a study with similar purposes, Li (2010) conducted an ethnographic study of how three culturally diverse, low-socioeconomic families use literacy daily and what cultural, socioeconomic, and environmental factors impact families' literacy practices in their home. Using observations and formal interviews, the researcher found that the households used literacy for school homework, self-improvement, entertainment and leisure, and fighting against school practices. Families had high educational expectations for their children and expected them to go to college. Families exposed children to multiple literacy activities to help the "cultural capital" that they deemed important to school learning.

Purcell-Gates (1996) conducted a descriptive study that sought to uncover the relationship between home literacy experiences (HLE) and emergent literacy knowledge in

low-SES homes. Participants in the study were 20 low-SES families that had one child in the home between ages four and six. The literacy levels of the parents ranged from “low-literate,” defined as parents who could not read and/or write well enough to participate in daily social lives, to “functionally literate,” defined as parents who could read and write at whatever level they needed. Researchers observed in the homes of those families who were the same ethnicity as themselves. Data was collected on the uses of print present in the home, as well as who was involved in the literacy experience, and any materials related to literacy found in the home. The data collected supported Purcell-Gates’ argument that children who were in homes where print was used more often, where mother-child interactions around print were greater, and where more written discourse was demonstrated learned the significance of print and its many functions to a higher degree than children who were not immersed in the aforementioned environment. In addition, the researcher discovered that regardless of the parents’ literacy level, once children began formal literacy instruction, parents began to or increased the amount of time they devoted to their children’s literacy learning. Parents of kindergarten and first-grade students were observed reading to their children ten times more often than parents of preschool children. This discovery suggests that the earlier children begin to receive formal literacy instruction, the more apt parents are to become involved in home literacy practices.

Burgess, Hecht, and Lonigan (2002), expanded Purcell-Gates’ (1996) research on the relationship between the Home Literacy Environment (HLE) and the developmental and educational outcomes of children. Studying 97 four- and five-year-old children from middle-income families, researchers classified children’s HLEs as overall, limiting, interactive, passive, active, and shared reading. Of these types of HLEs, passive, active, and shared

readings were the parents' primary focuses. In a passive HLE, parents modeled literacy usage, but did not directly teach skills. Parents in an active HLE directly engaged children in literacy and language activities such as rhyming games. Finally, in a shared reading HLE parents participated in many read-alouds with their children. Using measures of oral language, phonological sensitivity, and letter-name knowledge in the first stage of the study and assessments of oral language, phonological sensitivity, letter knowledge, and word decoding in the second stage, the researchers found that the type of HLE, not SES, was significantly related to student outcomes. More specifically, children in active HLEs had statistically significant greater gains on oral language, phonological sensitivity, and word decoding measures than children in other types of HLEs.

To further compare children from different socio-economic and ethnic-cultural backgrounds, van Steensel (2006) examined the relationship between the HLE and the early literacy development of 116 kindergarten and first-grade children in the Netherlands. The participants included 48 native Dutch families and 68 ethnic-minority families from Turkey, Morocco, Somalia, the Netherlands Antilles, Iraq, Surinam, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Egypt, Yemen and Poland. In order to determine family SES, van Steensel used the mother's educational level. Based on this information, 28 families were classified as low SES (mother only completed primary school), 43 were considered middle SES (mother completed prevocational training or junior secondary education), and 45 were considered high SES (mother had completed senior secondary or higher education). For the purpose of this study, a rich HLE was defined as an environment where parents or older siblings read and wrote for a variety of reasons, a child-directed HLE was defined as an environment where children frequently engaged in joint literacy activities, and a poor HLE was defined as an environment

where parents or older siblings seldom engaged in reading and writing activities. Once a factor analysis was generated, the data revealed that 30 families had a rich HLE, 47 families had a child-directed HLE, and 22 families had a poor HLE. While the majority of native Dutch families had a rich HLE, most ethnic minority families fell into the child-directed HLE. This parallels the results of Heath (1983) and Purcell-Gates (1996), and suggests that while not at the highest level of exposure, many minority children were frequently exposed to literacy activities at home. The study also concluded that children from rich HLEs had the highest scores on vocabulary and comprehension measures. However, lower scores were found among this group on word decoding measures in first- and second-grade and spelling measures in second grade. Conversely, children from child-directed and poor HLEs experienced a larger increase in vocabulary during first-grade. The researchers suggested that this increase was due to teachers who invested additional time in vocabulary development for children from child-directed and poor HLEs, compared to the time allotted to vocabulary development for children from rich HLEs.

In summary, regardless of socio-economic class or ethnicity, children who engage in naturally occurring home literacy experiences such as storybook reading, letter-based activities, singing, and playing language games had significantly higher scores on tasks of phonological awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and word decoding than those who did not. While the common misconception is that children from low SES and ethnic minority homes engage in few literacy experiences, the aforementioned studies demonstrate that many low SES families actively participated in reading and writing activities on a daily basis. In addition, it can be inferred that many low SES parents are concerned about their children's literacy development and engage in literacy activities that will help prepare their children for

formal school experiences. Furthermore, home literacy experiences have a positive relation to the reading achievement of primary age students.

Home-school programs. Along with family literacy programs that look at naturally occurring literacy in home environments, the second category of family literacy initiatives is home-school partnerships. In these programs, parents are generally informed about the goals and strategies used in the school literacy program and encouraged to engage in home literacy events that support children's literacy learning in school. To capitalize on the literacy and social experiences of 18 African America adolescent mothers enrolled in a home-school literacy program, Neuman, Celano, and Fischer (1996) used children's literature to engage mothers in "exploring text in relation to their own experience, nurturing different perceptions and points of view without setting boundaries or providing clues for potential response categories" (pp. 502-503). Parents were invited to do this through group discussions of 12 children's books that had multicultural foci, child-centered themes, various family structures depicted, and were enjoyable to read with their children. Rather than focusing on participants' mastery of the stories, the researchers analyzed participants' interpretations of characters and events, critical issues, literacy strengths, and the literacy needs of mothers and their children. By examining and categorizing transcribed sessions of participants' discussions, the researchers found that children's literature did stimulate discussions and that mothers connected their day-to-day experiences to the child-centered themes of the books. Secondly, by engaging in the social aspect of discussions, mothers discovered that other women experienced the same problems that they did. This not only helped mothers build confidence, but it allowed all mothers to confront problems and gain support from the group during problem-solving activities. Finally, the researchers discovered that mothers set family

literacy goals for themselves and their children as they participated in the program. For some mothers, improved literacy was an avenue to remove themselves from the economic dependency of the welfare-system and the familial cycle of illiteracy. For other mothers, improved literacy allowed them to be academic role models for their children. By being more “educated” mothers believed they could take better care of their children by finding resources and support for daily problems. Finally, mothers participated in the program for further personal growth and to achieve future goals

To further explore why adults participate in home-school family literacy programs, Handel (1999) interviewed seven mothers living in low-income, urban neighborhoods that participated in the Family Reading Program. The mothers, who had children in kindergarten through third-grade, answered questions about what they and their children had learned during the program, the literacy behaviors of both mother and child, and the reasons why they attended family literacy sessions. First of all, the researcher found that mothers engaged in the Family Reading Program for adult-centered reasons. Along with being concerned with the achievement of their children, mothers engaged in the program because of the learning they experienced, the social and enjoyable atmosphere of the workshop, and the gratification of achieving personal goals. Second, mothers were willing to invest in children’s literacy development by subscribing to children’s book services, creating social networks to assist with homework, and providing storytelling events in homes. Finally, the researcher discovered that schools became community resources for adult family members. Schools not only helped with the literacy development of children, but also helped parents and other family members with their personal literacy development.

To create a home-school family literacy program from a cultural perspective, Ortiz and Ordonez-Jasis (2005) focused on the family dynamics, cultural traditions, and literacy goals of Latino parents and children and offered culturally relevant recommendations to involve minority parents in family literacy programs. Reviewing the previous literature written about Latino families, the authors suggested that one way to increase Latino involvement in these programs was to obtain background information from both parents. Through parent surveys, individual interviews, focus groups, and home observations researchers obtained information from both parents about their perceptions and expectations for literacy usage in their lives. Furthermore, speaking to both parents gave researchers greater access to the child's daily literacy community. Findings from the data led to suggestions by the authors for others working with other Latino families. For example, when providing Latino parents with reading materials, the authors suggested that materials should be interesting, helpful, and important to families. Educators who select literacy from a wide range of genres covering such themes as Latino family values, traditions, social issues and social concerns are more likely to retain families and be successful. Finally, the authors advocated that schools understand why some Latino parents may not involve themselves in their child's literacy learning. For some Latino parents, especially new immigrants, American schools are unfamiliar and hard to maneuver. Parents may not understand the U.S. educational systems or do not speak English well enough to communicate with school personnel. In addition, schools may not understand the extended nature of Latino households and may not encourage family members such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles to attend events when parents cannot.

To meet the needs of children in extended families, Cook-Cottone (2004) designed a family literacy program that mentored families in using literacy techniques and appropriate scaffolding to transfer literacy knowledge from the adult to the child. Mentors included the parents, grandparents, and older siblings of 48 children ages 7 to 12 years old who were willing to learn instructional methods related to reading. Mentors were provided with information on read alouds, storytelling, decoding strategies, sight word strategies, and creative expression. After informational sessions were completed, mentors completed practice and outcomes surveys supplied by the researcher. Based on this data, mentors reported that the program improved their literacy skills, as well as the skills of the children involved in the study. In addition, mentors asserted that the scaffolding techniques modeled by teachers and other community members were helpful and informative. Finally, family mentors reported that the family literacy program helped with the “cultural mismatch” (p. 214) between culturally driven home environments and formal school environments.

To further explore the cultural mismatch for Spanish and English speaking parents, Burningham and Dever (2005) studied a home-school partnership program for parents with kindergarten children in an urban school district. Over the course of four weeks, parents in the program participated in two-hour training sessions and group discussions focused on the importance of early literacy and the reading and writing connection. To provide an opportunity for parents to practice newly-learned information, families checked-out family literacy bags. The bags contained two high-quality children’s books, activities related to the books, a small tape recorder and a tape recording of the book, and a parent guidebook with ways to read and discuss the book with children. Since participants spoke both English and Spanish, some of the literacy bags contained books and guidebooks in Spanish along with

children's books that focused on Hispanic families and Hispanic culture. Using Likert-type scale surveys and open-ended questions, participating parents self-reported that they enjoyed spending more time with their children in reading interactions, found guidebooks and activities helpful, and valued the free children's books that were given at each session.

To assess the outcomes children gain from participating in family literacy activities, Hindin and Paratore (2007) studied a school and home repeated-reading intervention of the lowest second-grade students in an urban, culturally diverse elementary school. Students were given copies of a classroom shared-reading text to take home and read with their parents. Parents were asked to record children reading the provided text and assist with unknown words as needed four times a week. Using audiotapes of in-school and at-home reading, teacher and parent interviews, and the results of informal reading inventories, the researchers found that children significantly increased their fluency, improved their independent reading level on the Qualitative Reading Inventory II, and decreased their error rate on leveled reading material during the intervention.

To add to the body of research on children's outcomes in family literacy programs, Nutbrown and Hannon (2003) conducted a unique study of children's perspectives on family literacy programs by interviewed 148 five-year-old children about their views of family literacy. Children were asked six questions, with prompts, about literacy experiences involving reading, writing, nursery rhymes, and environmental print. Children in the study were into divided into two groups based on whether or not their family had participated in a family literacy program for 18 months. Based on an interview analysis, researchers discovered that young children had definite perspectives on family literacy. Four findings were consistent throughout the interviews. First of all, children were engaged in some type of

literacy at home. Regardless of the home situation, all children reported participating in literacy activities of reading, writing, nursery rhymes, or environmental print. Second, children reported that fathers were involved in literacy at home. Third, boys in the study were actively involved in literacy activities. Last of all, the researchers found that enrolling in family literacy programs did create differences in family literacy practices at home. As a final point to the study, Nutbrown and Hannon also provided the reader with three considerations for the future development of family literacy program based on the children's responses.

To determine how the literacy support of mothers, fathers, and friends impacted the recreational reading and reading motivation of fourth and fifth graders, Klauda and Wigfield (2012) found that parental involvement does make a difference. When students engaged in reading interactions with parents and friends, their desire to read recreationally increased and they selected more challenging material to read. In addition, students were motivated to read certain text (i.e. books, newspapers, magazines) when they wished to share knowledge and understanding of topics with parents or friends. Finally, when parents provided feedback and opportunities for children to practice reading to them, children's confidence and reading skills improved.

Instead of believing that children start as empty slates when they become involved in family programs, program developers need to build on children's and families' existing knowledge and skills. Thus, family literacy programs must extend and respect the home literacy experience. Secondly, family literacy programs should emphasize the role of both parents on children's literacy development. To be successful, the researchers stressed that family literacy programs need to maximize the involvement of fathers, as well as other

family members. Last of all, family literacy programs need to be adapted and adjusted to meet the needs of family participants. The delivery of the program may include home visits with fathers and mothers, group discussion sessions, or adult-learning opportunities based on participant needs.

Intergenerational programs. The final category of family literacy programs is intergenerational literacy programs designed to focus on the literacy development of both the family and the children. Programs such as these offer literacy instruction to the parents, teach parents how to help their children with literacy development, and often give parents the opportunity to utilize newly-learned activities or skills in school or home-like settings. Edwards (1992) developed an intergenerational program called Parents as Partners in Reading. Using simple books, she developed the program to provide parents with abundant opportunities to practice reading books with their children. Familiar books and stories were repeatedly read and parents were encouraged to start with wordless picture books and environmental print books. Furthermore, effective book-reading behaviors were modeled and the literacy needs of individual parents were met in a positive environment where parents supported each other and celebrated when friends moved closer to becoming confident readers. Using data from parent surveys, parents self-reported that they had not only improved their personal literacy skills, but they also felt that they were true partners in their children's learning. During informal observations, the researcher also noted that parents began using many of the read aloud techniques that she modeling during sessions.

As an extension to the aforementioned study, Edwards (1995) researched the long-term effects of the Parents as Partners in Reading program. Although Edwards no longer monitored the program, a group of four mothers previously enrolled in the study, assisted

other mothers and fathers in sharing books with their children. Using small, cooperative learning groups, the parent leaders modeled effective book-reading for their peers, facilitated group discussions, and monitored group feedback. While the book-reading program was more loosely structured under the parent leaders than it was when the researcher was facilitating meetings, the parent leaders revised the program to reflect the participants' culture and empowered parents to use a book-reading style that meet their needs.

To help break the cycle of intergenerational low literacy and poverty, the Even Start Family Literacy program was created in 1989. Divided into four components, the program seeks to provide parents and their children, birth through age 7, with family literacy skills and activities. Each Even Start program includes childhood education that prepares children for school and life success; adult literacy training to help parents improve basic education skills; parenting education to help parents assist children to reach their full potential as learners; and interactive literacy activities between parents and their children (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Based on data from a 1995 National Evaluation of the program, there were approximately 800 Even Start sites nationwide that served one million parents and children. Using the National Evaluation Information System (NEIS) researchers found significant effects on children and adults enrolled in Even Start programs. Children had higher gains on the Preschool Inventory that measured school readiness and were more likely to be enrolled in early childhood education programs. Parents who participated in the program were more apt to complete their GED and reported more reading material in their homes than the control group. Finally, teachers reported that elementary school aged children in the program had fewer behavior problems than children in the control group (U.S. Department of Education, 1995; U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

To help immigrant families improve literacy and language skills, the Intergenerational Literacy Project, sponsored by Boston University, offers parent classes that encourage literacy experiences between families and children. Through daily reflections, large group discussions, small group analysis and class readings of original English literature, parents strengthen their English language skills, discuss relevant topics, expand vocabulary, and build on previous knowledge. To further the language and literacy development of children from participating families, an on-site child education classroom provides music, art, use of program computers for story-writing and instructional programs, as well as homework support and a book discussion group for school-aged children. Using attendance and retention measures, parents' self-reported engagement in reading and writing activities with their children, and children's school success, Paratore (2005) found that parents involved in the ILP project were more likely to attend and remain in adult basic education class than adults in other family literacy programs. In addition, parents increased the amount of time they engaged in literacy events with their children and engaged in storybook reading with children at least once a week.

To further explore the relationship between emergent biliteracy and intergenerational learning of Mexican Spanish-English bilingual families, Reyes, Alexandra, and Azaura (2006) researched the knowledge, context and environments in which preschool children developed biliteracy. Using reading assessments such as the environmental print awareness task, Clay's Concepts about Print (COP) task, interviews with children about their perceptions and attitudes about COP, writing, and home observations, the researchers found that families used writing materials and engaged in literacy activities in both languages. While parents recognized the importance of their children's emergent biliteracy by writing

and reading in English, they also advocated the home language as a method to maintain the cultural and personal connection of Spanish-speaking relatives. Furthermore, the researchers learned that

intergenerational learning occurred across family members. As adults and older peers served to help the preschool children expand their literacy knowledge, children may also scaffold parents as they translate English words for parents.

Fathers and Family Literacy

Since research on family literacy began, the focus has been on maternal involvement. Mikelson (2008) found that data on fathers' involvement is lacking for several reasons. First, there are few longitudinal studies on fathers' involvement. Second, numerous studies only collect information about the presence or absence of a biological father in the household. Third, mothers tend to underestimate the amount of father involvement and the impact when reporting data. Finally, since past trends in research suggest that fathers' response rates are lower, researchers have chosen to focus solely on the mothers' responses about paternal involvement. Saracho and Spokek (2008) assert that modern social conditions such as increasing divorce rates, increasing numbers of women in the work force, and increasing non-custodial or non-parental care for children, have challenged fathers to take a more active role in childrearing. Data collected by the National Center for Educational Statistics (1997) suggest "children do better in school when their fathers are involved in schools, regardless of whether their fathers live with them" (p. 71). When fathers are involved, children: (a) make more A's, (b) are less likely to repeat a grade, (c) participate in extracurricular activities, and (d) enjoy school more. In addition, children of involved fathers have higher levels of economic achievement, career success, and higher psychological well being. Further, the

relationship between fathers' involvement and their child's school success was important regardless of income, race or ethnicity, or the parents' level of education.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2008), 37% of African America children live in two-parent married and unmarried biological families. Another 4.7% live with their biological mother and stepfather/adoptive father and 2% live with their biological father and stepmother/adoptive mother. Finally, 3.3% of African America children live in households with only single, biological fathers. In an effort to get fathers more involved in family literacy programs, a recent body of research has focused on literacy programs specifically designed for fathers (Bauman & Wasserman, 2010; Fagan & Iglesias, 1999; Hofferth, 2003; Ortiz, 2000; Saracho, 2007; Saracho, 2008; Saracho & Spodek, 2008). In this research, the term *father* refers to biological (either residential or nonresidential) or adoptive fathers, while the term *social father* (Bzostek, 2008) refers to stepfathers, mother's partners, grandfathers, uncles, older male siblings, or any man fulfilling the paternal role for a child. In a 2010 study by the Pew Research Center, 24% of African American men reported that they have at least one stepchild, while 15% of Caucasian men and 7% of Hispanic men reported the same. According to the 2008 American Community Survey published by the U.S. Census Bureau, 6.4 million grandparents had grandchildren younger than 18 living with them. Of that number, 2.6 million are responsible for the basic needs (i.e., food, shelter, clothing) of one or more of the grandchildren. Of the 2.6 million grandparent caregivers, 1.6 million were grandmothers and 983,000 were grandfathers.

As noted in the data presented above, a large number of fathers and social fathers are responsible for the primary care of children has grown. As such, much of the recent literacy research on fathers has sought to determine the level and types of literacy involvement

fathers and social fathers engage in with their children. Allen and Daly (2007) analyzed more than 50 research studies on father involvement and found that research measured father involvement in one of three ways: time spent together, quality of the father-child relationship, and investment in the paternal role. When studying time spent together, researchers measured the frequency and duration of time a father and child engaged in activities such as meals, play, reading, or physical routines such as bathing, clothing, or diapering. The quality of the father-child relationship was measured by the child's extent of attachment to the father and how the father parented. This included how fathers communicated, how often fathers were available, how affectionate or protective fathers were, and how fathers supported the emotional development of their child. The final measurement of father involvement was the investment in the paternal role. Fathers were measured based on their behavior management skills, their attention to children's needs, and their support of children's school-related activities.

To study the effects of Hispanic/Latino father's literacy roles, Ortiz (2000) examined the literacy interactions of 26 father-child dyads from an urban school district in Southern California. Using questionnaires, fathers self-reported that they were involved in early literacy practices with their children. However, the duration and type of activities varied across dyads. Ninety-four percent of fathers reported school-related reading interactions compared to 73% of fathers that engaged in reading for recreational purposes. Along with personal academic and recreational reading, fathers engaged in reading interactions that included religious reading, work-related reading, and reading associated with daily household tasks. Finally, the researcher found that fathers involved themselves in early literacy practices because they wanted to help their children in school, share personal interests, convey

religious beliefs or traditions, pass along work-related skills, and show that reading could be used for recreational and entertainment fun.

While reading with or to children is one of the main ways fathers engage in literacy activities with their children, Karther (2002) studied whether the reading practices of fathers with low literacy was similar to other fathers. Through interviews of two European-American fathers whose families participated in an Even Start Family Literacy program, the researcher found that despite their own frustrations with reading, the fathers initiated literacy activities with their preschool children. Because of the father's low literacy skills, "reading" books often consisted of showing their children pictures in the book and discussions about characters or themes from the book. In addition, the fathers actively monitored children's literacy development and taught pre-reading skills such as alphabet recognition.

In a quasi-experimental study of 96 fathers and social fathers from Head Start locations, Fagan and Iglesias (1999) adapted traditional Head Start parent activities to meet the needs of African America and Latino American fathers and social fathers. Realizing that not all biological fathers are able or chose to be involved in their child's literacy development, the researchers encouraged social fathers such as grandfathers, uncles, stepfathers, and mother's boyfriends to participate in the study. Fathers and social fathers were placed in either a comparison or intervention group and all were interviewed and videotaped playing with their children for 16 minutes. Fathers and social fathers selected for the intervention group were encouraged to participate in family literacy components specifically adapted for fathers. The adapted activities included fathers volunteering in classrooms, weekly Father's Day programs at each Head Start site, father support groups, and father-child recreation activities. The researchers found that fathers and social fathers in the

intervention group, who were highly involved in the program, made the greatest gains in the amount of time spent with children in direct interaction and support for learning. In addition, there was no difference in the impact of the intervention based on the fathers' or social fathers' residential status. Regardless of whether the father or social father lived with their child or lived elsewhere, highly involved fathers and social fathers significantly increased the amount of time they spent volunteering in classrooms, playing with children, and reading to children.

In a similar study focused on literacy interactions between fathers and their children, Saracho (2008) observed the literacy practices of 25 father-child dyads enrolled in a family literacy intervention program. To increase understanding of children's literacy development, fathers attended three-hour literacy workshops twice a week. Fathers learned to explore literacy through social interactions and to use children's interests and skills to guide home literacy activities. During a five-month period, the researcher documented what fathers did with their kindergarten children around literacy and language in the home environment. Data collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis uncovered that while fathers used their own personal style and interests to carry out strategies learned during intervention sessions, each father-child literacy interaction had three aspects in common. First of all, fathers encouraged children to explore written language by modeling reading and writing behaviors and answering children's questions about the importance of reading and writing. Secondly, fathers used the literacy interactions to convey their interests, concepts, and world- or community-knowledge to their children. This was often done through book selection and dialogues surrounding the text being read. Lastly, by connecting literacy to

community and family life, fathers became more involved in their children's early literacy development by collaboratively writing books, recipes, and other text with children.

To further encourage fathers to engage in literacy interactions with their children, Bauman and Wasserman (2010) designed a program to empower fifteen fathers to take an increased role in their children's academic literacy development through six literacy workshops. The goals of the workshops included engaging children with books through interactive read alouds, teaching concepts of print using homemade books, developing oral language, and connecting oral language, vocabulary, and writing through the Language Experience Approach. Using observations and interviews, the researchers found that after the six workshops fathers felt more comfortable with increasing their participation in literacy activities with their children ages infant to kindergarten. Specifically, the researchers established that fathers were more interested and committed to the continued literacy development of their children, fathers learned the importance of literacy development and regularly engaged in a variety of literacy activities that promoted school success, and fathers supported each other to increase literacy confidence and increase their role in their child's literacy development.

Though varied in definition and structure, family literacy initiatives are abundant and seek to help families increase literacy interactions in home environments. From the family literacy practices of Cotton Mather in 18th Century Boston (Monaghan, 1991) to more current research by Saracho (2008), home-literacy experiences are communal activities that exist among various family members and children. While interests, motivations, and the type of interactions may vary based on culture, parent gender, or socioeconomic class, family literacy initiatives are important in children's academic success. As evidenced by the

research provided previously, family literacy can take on many different forms. One method commonly utilized by families and family literacy initiatives is storybook interactions or interactive book reading. In the next section, definitions of interactive book reading, the effects of adult-children interactions during interactive book reading, and various styles of interactive book reading will be examined.

Interactive Book Reading

Interactive book reading can be defined as “interactions between adults and children that go beyond the traditional routine in which the adult reads the text while the child listens” (Justice, Pence, Beckman, Skibbe, & Wiggins, 2005, p. 1). Unlike traditional storybook interactions, children and adults construct dialogue around story structure, make connections to children’s experiences, and discover specific words or concepts of print during interactive book reading. For the purpose of this study, fathers and social fathers will be encouraged to read a variety of text with their children. The term “text” will include any reading interactions between the adult-child dyad that revolves around books, magazines, and newspapers. In alignment with the research on adult-child interactive book reading, are the sociocultural views of Vygotsky. Vygotsky believed that social interaction is critical to cognitive development and that children’s cognitive development first occurs on the social level, then the individual level. Furthermore, learning develops within a child’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is the zone between a child’s ability to perform a specific task with scaffolding from a more knowledgeable person, such as a teacher, adult, or older child, and the student’s ability to perform the task independently (Vygotsky, 1978). Book interactions provide a vehicle for engaging with text with a more capable other

resulting in a number of benefits to children, noted previously, as a result of the adult/child interaction.

The purpose of this section is to examine the research on adult-child interaction styles during interactive book reading and the subsequent effects of book interactions on academic achievement, language development, and vocabulary development. In addition, many of the studies discussed will focus on the socioeconomic status (SES) of the participants and the academic achievement of children from low-SES homes.

Effects of Adult-Child Interactive Book Reading

Adult-child book interactions and reading achievement have long been studied by reading researchers. In one of the earliest studies of adult-child interactive book reading, Durkin (1966) interviewed early readers and parents to determine the factors that influenced the development of children reading before formal reading instruction. Defining early readers as beginning first-grade children who were able to read 18 of 37 words on a words list and who had not received any formal instruction in reading, Durkin discovered that preschool children became interested in learning to read because of curiosity, interest, and being read to at home. In addition, children who were eager to keep up with older siblings and had reading materials at home were more likely to be early readers. As the author pointed out, “young children are much more responsive to help with reading that is a consequence of their own questions rather than of their parents’ ambition or insecurity” (p. 135). The author also found that early readers were interested in learning to print prior to, or simultaneously with, an interest in learning to read and that preschool children often became interested in whole word writing, spelling, and reading because of being read to by a parent or older sibling. As a final point, Durkin stressed early readers, as a group, continued to score higher on reading

assessments throughout school as opposed to their age-level peers who did not begin to read until first grade.

In a subsequent study, Durkin (1984) found that regardless of socioeconomic class, Black children in a Midwestern city could become successful readers. After interviewing 15 high-achieving sixth-grade readers, Durkin found that twelve of the participants entered kindergarten already reading and that parents viewed their child's academic success as an outcome of being read to at home from an early age and the preschool help that the children received. Parents also attributed academic success to the importance placed on completing homework and the household belief that doing well in school was a means to achieve the "good life" in the future. Finally, families who continued to stay involved in children's schoolwork and encouraged a love of reading played an important role in children's year-after-year academic success in reading.

Meta-Analyses of Book Interaction Studies

Following Durkin's initial work, many studies were conducted on the effects of parent reading on children. Due to the large number of studies on book interaction, meta-analyses of seminal research will be discussed in this section. In an effort to statistically synthesize the findings across studies, Bus, van IJzendoorn, and Pellegrini (1995) completed a quantitative meta-analysis of 31 studies on interactive book reading with preschoolers in the home environment. Selecting studies that focused on the frequency of book reading between parents and preschoolers, the researchers found that parent-preschooler book reading has a positive effect on language skills, emergent literacy, and reading achievement. The researchers found the effect size was strongest for language skills, followed closely by emergent literacy and reading skills. This data supports the researchers' hypothesis that

interactive book reading experiences are effective in helping students understand the written language of books. While some adults engage children in interactive book readings, not all children experience these interactions with the same frequency or quality. As concluded in the review of the literature, children from low socioeconomic (SES) homes traditionally engage in fewer interactive book reading sessions and score lower on measures of reading achievement than children from mid- to upper-class SES homes. This meta-analysis also showed that even in low-SES homes with fewer interactive book reading experiences, students' literacy skills were positively affected when engaging in interactive book reading experiences. Furthermore, Bus and colleagues concluded, "book reading is not just a minor part of a literate environment but rather a main condition for developing the knowledge necessary for eventual success in reading acquisition" (p. 16).

Senechal (2006) also conducted a meta-analysis of book interaction studies. However, her focus was on parent involvement and the reading acquisition of children from grades kindergarten to grade three. She selected only studies that focused on parent-child interventions and included both a trained intervention group and a control group. Interventions included parents as readers in some studies and children as readers in others. In addition, selected studies had to measure the effect of parent-child interactions on children's literacy development. Of the considered studies, 14 matched this criterion. Senechal determined that parental involvement of the 1174 families represented in the studies had a positive impact on children's reading acquisition. While all interventions benefitted children, Senechal's findings suggest that those interventions in which parents were trained to teach specific skills to their child had a larger effect on children's reading performance than when parents had no training. In addition, interventions reviewed were as effective for children that

had reading difficulties as for children without the same difficulties. Finally, based on the finding that parents listening to children read aloud enhanced literacy development, Senechal encouraged educators to provide training on specific listening and scaffolding techniques to help parents maximize the read aloud time.

Parent-Child Interaction Styles

Just as the outcomes of interactive storybook reading vary between studies, so too do the interaction styles between parents and children. In one of the earliest studies on parent-child interaction styles, Ninio (1980) researched the mother-child interactions of twenty high-SES Israelis and 20 low-SES Israelis reading picture books to their 17- to 22-month-old infants. Using audiotaped recordings of mothers reading three books to toddlers and encouraging mothers to ask children questions to demonstrate the words they knew, the researcher found that while there was no SES difference in turn-taking, length of interactions, quantity, positiveness, or informativeness of feedback, high-SES mothers said more words and had more turn-taking behaviors than low-SES mothers. In addition, low-SES mothers used less vocabulary to describe pictures and asked fewer “what” questions than high-SES mothers. High-SES mothers who asked more “what” questions helped children label pictures and vocalize the labels. Low-SES mothers in this study often asked more “where” questions that required infants to indicate understanding by pointing. The researcher asserted that for low-SES mothers, the 17- to 22-month age range of their infants is typically not a period for “increased activation, informativeness, or for the provision of more difficult information” (p. 589). While Ninio did not assess the vocabulary development of the children, the author did hypothesize that without this extra stimulation, the rate of vocabulary development for low-

SES children may be lower than the vocabulary development of children who have not had book interactions with their mothers as this age.

In a study of low income, minority parents from an urban Head Start program, Neuman (1996) investigated parent style in general and parent style by self-reported level of reading proficiency and found significant interactions between the text type and parent's interaction styles. Using transcribed audio recordings of the 4th, 8th and 12th interactive book reading sessions between each parent-child dyad, the author looked for trends in interactions of highly predictable, episodic predictable, and narrative text types and the extent book interactions differed between proficient and less proficient parent readers. When reading highly predictive text such as *Henny Penny*, children chimed along with the text and parents corrected or confirmed responses significantly more than when reading other types of text. Comparatively, when reading narrative texts with a traditional story structure such as *The Snowy Day*, interactions expanded meaning and linked text to something that was either involved or went beyond the child's own experience. In addition, there was a significant difference between the interaction styles of parents who self-classified themselves as "low-proficiency readers" versus "proficient readers". Low-proficiency readers were defined as parents who indicated that they had reading difficulties and were currently enrolled in a school-based literacy program, whereas proficient readers were defined as parents who did not indicate they had reading difficulties. The research data showed that low-proficiency readers and their children engaged in more book-focused questions around highly predictive text, while proficient readers focused on meaning-based comprehension questions in narrative text. Furthermore, gains in receptive language were significant for all children, regardless of parents' level of reading proficiency, between pre-and post-test measures on the

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. For the children of low-proficiency readers the gains in receptive language were greater than the gains of children with proficient parents. The mean scores of children from homes with low-proficiency parents doubled on receptive language and almost tripled on the concepts-of-print task. This data seems to suggest that even parents with lower reading abilities can make significant impact on their children's academic success when they engage in storybook interactions.

To examine the role adults serve in book interactions, Roser and Martinez (1985) examined the interactions of parents who read with their three-and-a-half to five-year-old children at home. After analyzing 10 months of data which included audiotaped read-alouds done at home and school and children's weekly language responses to those books, the researchers found that adults could be categorized into three groups: co-responders, informer/monitors and directors. Co-responders initiated discussions that focused on describing information in illustrations, sharing personal reactions, or inviting children to share. Informer/monitors explained different aspects of stories and monitored children's understandings, while directors introduced stories and assumed management or leadership roles in discussions. Thus, the authors found that co-responder and informer/monitors styles to be the most beneficial to students. Parents who assumed the roles of co-responder and informer/monitor engaged children in more rich discussions about storybooks. When parents were co-responders and informer/monitors, they modeled mature interactions with text, invited children to respond, and deemed themselves suppliers of information and monitors of comprehension.

Parent-Child Interactions: Parent Gender, Text Selection, and Interaction

Parent interaction styles also may be influenced by the gender of the parent reading the text and the text selected. Anderson and colleagues conducted two studies related to this issue. The first focused exclusively on selection and gender. In a study of 12 fathers and 12 mothers of four-year-old sons and daughters, Anderson, Anderson, Shapiro and Lynch (2001) found there was a difference between the books fathers and mothers chose to read to their children. To determine what books parents would select, each parent was given one narrative and one informational book to read with their child and were immediately asked to which book they would choose for their child, which book they would not choose, and a explanation for their choice. When provided with books from a variety of genres, parents selected informational text almost as frequently as narrative text. Although fathers and mothers tended to select narratives like *The Berenstain Bears and the Missing Honey* as frequently as they selected expository text like *Building Machines and What They Do*, when they took the child's gender into consideration, book selections varied. Half the parents in the study selected three of the four informational texts versus one of four narrative texts when selecting text for their sons. Comparatively, parents did not seem to favor either narrative or informative text when selecting text for their daughters. The authors also found that there was little difference in book selection based on the parents' gender. Instead, parents chose books based on the child's gender, the subject-matter contained in the book, and children's interests.

To extend their research on parent-child dyads sharing narrative and expository text, Anderson, Anderson, Lynch and Shapiro (2004) investigated whether there was a difference between mothers' and fathers interactions with children during book interactions, if there was

a difference in interactions based on the child's gender, and if there was a difference in interactions when sharing narrative versus expository text. By analyzing the verbal and non-verbal interactions of two videotaped shared reading interactions between each dyad, the researchers found that fathers and mothers differ in terms of the types of interactions they engage in with their four-year-old children. The researchers discovered that when the twenty-five dyads read narrative or expository books to children, fathers were more interactive than mothers. Whereas father-child dyads shared from 65 to 345 interactions across four book-reading episodes, mother-child dyads shared from 34 to 189 interactions. The interaction style also varied depending on the type of text that was read. When parents shared expository text there were considerably more interactions between the dyads than when narrative text was shared.

In another study comparing the difference in interactions by parent gender, Schwartz (2004) investigated how mothers and fathers differed when they read aloud to their 13- to 46-month old children. During the study, 27 mother-child dyads and 36 father-child dyads were observed once a week for three consecutive weeks as they read to their children. Observers were specifically looking for read-aloud behaviors such as probing for literal comprehension, repeating children's utterances, encouraging children's efforts through praise, asking questions, probing children's interpretive comprehension, expansion of children's responses, and talking about children's interests as it related to the read-aloud book. The researcher discovered that differences did exist between mothers and fathers during interactive book reading with their children. While mothers used more interactive strategies with higher cognitive demand, fathers used more literal strategies that encouraged children to engage in less stimulating dialogue and thinking. As somewhat of a contradiction to the overall pattern

of interactions by mother compared to fathers, the researcher also found that mothers used more literal strategies with boys and fathers used more interpretive strategies with girls. Finally, the researcher found that there was no statistical significance between mothers' and fathers' use of praise and encouragement during storybook interactions.

To examine the effects of text genre and text format on the book interactions of 13 mother-child dyads from a Head Start program in the Southeast, Pellegrini, Perlmutter, Galda, and Brody (1990) videotaped dyads reading one of four text types. The text types included traditional narratives (*The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and *Little Red Hen*), familiar narratives (comics such as *For Better or For Worse* and *Hagar*), traditional expository text (*Who Lives in the Zoo* and *My First Book of Words*), and familiar expository text (labeled pictures of toy advertisements from the local newspaper and parts of the school environment). To gauge the cognitive demand of mothers' teaching strategies, each strategy was classified as having a high, medium, or low mental demand. High-demand strategies were questions, evaluations, and conclusions, while medium-demand strategies included sequencing, clarification, and management. Low-demand strategies included labeling, observing, or describing. Overall, the researchers found that children's participation was greater when expository text was used. In addition, interacting with traditional and familiar expository text led to the greater use of parental teaching strategies than did interacting with familiar and traditional narratives. Finally, mothers utilized low-demand strategies more often with traditional expository text and high-demand strategies more often with familiar expository text. The authors hypothesized that mothers used more teaching strategies with expository text compared to narrative text because mothers were motivated to read the narrative story as a whole versus reading labels and captions in expository text.

Parental Interaction and Illustrations

As well as the focus on parental roles and text genre during storybook interactions, researchers also have focused on descriptions and questions about illustrations during adult-child book interactions. Observing two children during storybook interactions in their home and seven other children in a university preschool, Yaden, Smolkin, and Conlon (1989) used audiotaped recordings to code children's questions during repeated book interactions with the same reader, as well as book interactions across different readers and different books. The researchers found that while children asked questions about story meaning, word meaning, and book conventions, 40% to 60% of children's questions were about illustrations in storybooks.

Similarly, Baker, Mackler, Sonnenschein, and Serpell (2001) used videotaped recordings and home reading inventories to discover that talk about illustrations was the most common meaning-related talk between mother-child dyads regardless of whether the mother or the child was the primary reader. Conversely, decontextualized talk, or talk out of the here-and-now, about content-related items and illustrations created a more positive affective reading environment.

Summary

While adult-child interaction styles varied across the studies, the research does not suggest that one particular style is better than any other. Instead, the overarching theme throughout all the studies is that most parent-child interaction styles only serve to benefit the development of children. Regardless of whether a parent is labeled as a low-proficiency reader or proficient reader, the research suggests that interactive book reading can increase children's understanding of written language, concepts of print and

alphabet knowledge. Furthermore, intervention programs which focus on helping parents strengthen their print-referencing behaviors can influence their comfort level with book interactions and uncover the benefits of book reading activities for parents.

Culturally Authentic Children's Literature

The previous sections of this literature review examined family literacy and storybook interactions. One key question that remains to be addressed is how parents of racially-diverse children select culturally authentic children's literature to utilize during book interactions. This section seeks to address that question, as well as the importance of including culturally authentic children's literature in home libraries.

The idea of culturally authentic children's literature is not a new topic for researchers. From the early works of Rudine Sims (1982) to later works by Fox and Short (2003), the definition of culturally-authentic children's literature has varied. Sims (1982) defined cultural authenticity as the extent to which a book reflects a specific cultural group and includes authentic details of language and everyday life for members of that cultural group. Mo and Shen (2003) argued that "Cultural authenticity is not just accuracy or the avoidance of stereotypes, but involves the cultural values, facts, and attitudes that members of that culture as a whole consider worth of acceptance and belief" (p. 200). Finally, Fox and Short (2003) view cultural authenticity as "something that cannot be defined, although 'you know it when you see it' as an insider reading a book about your own culture" (p. 4).

For this review of literature, culturally-authentic children's literature will be defined as children's literature that highlights the values, beliefs, and attitudes of people of color in a non-stereotypical, authentic manner. The first part of this section will investigate the historical and contemporary implications of selecting culturally-authentic children's literature

throughout several cultures. However, the primary focus of this section will be on African America children's literature. The second part of this section will address criteria to select appropriate African America children's literature. Throughout this section, the terms used to identify people currently referred to as "African American" will vary based on the terminology utilized by the author referenced. Depending on the publication date and the author's preference, the terms *colored*, *Negro*, *Afro-American*, *Black*, or *African American* will occur. These terms are not meant to be derogatory, but rather, to honor the words of the authors and the historical significance of the term during a specific time period.

Research suggests that it is crucial to find culturally-authentic literature for children to read as a means for supporting children's self-esteem. In a case-study of 11-year-old Osula, Sims (1983) argued that African America children's literature is important because the exclusion of African Americas in literature is harmful to Black and White children, and that African America books promote positives attitudes and behaviors on the part of the reader. Osula reported that she read 30 books with African America characters. When Sims analyzed the books, she found that almost all were related to Osula's personal experiences and contained characters with which she could identify. Specifically, Osula preferred books with characters that were African America, female, strong, and active. These findings correspond to the findings by Purves and Beach ten years earlier. Using a statistical analysis of previous studies on student's interest in reading material, Purves and Beach (1972) found that readers find books interesting if they can relate it to their personal experiences, readers seek characters in which they can identify and become involved and readers tend to most favorably related to characters that resemble them.

While students enjoy reading books with characters that share cultural and life experiences, there remains a limited number of these books for girls ages 8 to 10. In a recent study of transitional chapter books with young African American female protagonists, McNair and Brooks (2012) found that only three book series were written by African American women and were approximately 100 pages, the norm for transitional chapter books. Analyzing Dyamonde Daniel (i.e. *Make Way for Dyamonde Daniel*), Nikki and Deja (i.e. *Nikki & Deja: Birthday Blues*), and Willimena (i.e. *Willimena Rules! How to Lose Your Class Pet*) book series, the researchers determined that the books fell into four topic categories: solidifying friendships, developing morality, fitting in, and valuing learning. Furthermore, African American transitional chapter books exposed girls to sophisticated female characterizations, provided girls with current depictions of African American culture, and depicted in illustrations authentic women with varying skin tones and hair styles.

Evolution of Culturally Authentic Asian Pacific American, Latino American, and Native American Children's Literature

The evolution of culturally-authentic children's literature is not unique to one minority group. In a study of Asian Pacific American children's literature, Yamate (1997) found that children's literature reinforces the perceptions of Asian Pacific Americans as foreigners, rather than fellow Americans. Of the four to five thousand children's books published in the years she studied, Yamate discovered that, on average, only 10 a year were about Asian cultures. Furthermore, while there are over 50 different Asian ethnic groups who do not share common histories, language, religion and culture, books written about Asians Americans often focused only on Japanese or Chinese cultures. Since Yamate's study, the number of books written by and about Asian Pacific Americans has increased. In 2009, out

of an estimated 5,000 children's books published, Asian Pacific Americans wrote 67 and 80 were written about Asian Pacific Americans (Cooperative Children's Book Center, 2010). Despite an increase in the number of books published by companies such as Polychrome Publishing and Children's Book Press, Yamate listed four institutional barriers that hamper publication. First of all, the industry reviewing process for culturally-authentic children literature is inconsistent and often done without reviewing standards. Reviewers often do not have multicultural backgrounds or the racial or ethnic diversity to understand the values, attitudes or standards of certain community. Secondly, multicultural books are expected to have a universal theme in which race or ethnicity have a marginal role. Instead of focusing on differences between people, the idea is that multicultural books should concentrate on the attributes we all share. Thirdly, many of the books about Asian American did not differentiate between Asian, Pacific Islanders, and Asian Pacific Americans. Finally, Asian Pacific American books, in fact any books about a specific ethnic group, are marketed to only that cultural group. Yamate asserts that if books are only intended for the particular racial or ethnic group it represents, then those books fail to educate and inform those of other races about the targeted group.

In an analysis of 117 Latino American children's books published between 1992 to 1995, Barrera and de Cortes (1997) found that while the number of books published had increased from 6 books to an average of 19 books per year, not all books were considered culturally authentic. The researchers estimated that about 34% of the books analyzed were written by persons of Latino American ancestry, but almost half of those books were written by one Latino American author, Gary Soto. Furthermore, almost 22% of the books were bilingual editions that contained English and Spanish text within one volume, and that very

few books had separate editions originally written in Spanish with accompanying English-language editions. The researchers cautioned that while some English-language books have been translated to Spanish, they should not be considered multicultural because “a change in text language alone does not constitute a content change in perspectives and images” (p. 132). Despite the slowly changing depiction of Latino Americans in children’s books, the researchers found common themes within these books. The first common theme found in this study is that Latino Americans are exotic and foreign people. In many children’s books this is conveyed by the emphasis on cultural aspects of foods and holiday celebrations. Secondly, several children’s books view Latino Americans through the narrow lens of migrant and immigrant groups. On a positive note, the researchers discovered that fewer Latino American children’s books depicted the ethnic group as poor, ignorant, and needing to learn English and being acculturated. In addition, text written in the 1990s showed families as supportive, living in urban areas, and having fewer children than previous text. Since the published study by Barrera and de Cortes (1997), the number of books written by Latino Americans has significantly increased. In 2009, out of the approximate 5,000 books published, the number of books written by Latino Americans was 60 and the number of books written about Latino Americans was 61 (Cooperative Children’s Book Center, 2010).

Just as Asian Pacific Americans and Latino Americans in children’s literature have been depicted erroneously, so too have Native Americans. Reese (1997) found that Native Americans in children’s literature are based on stereotypical images presented in movies, television and various forms of advertising. Illustrations of Native Americans in children’s books are drawn wearing a feathered headdress, no shoes, no shirts, and carrying tomahawks or bows and arrows. In addition, illustrations can mislead children into believing that all

Native American people have black hair and dark skin. Reese also discovered that images of Native Americans are presented as “generic Indians” (p. 159) who are a mixture of many different Native American tribes. Reese attributes this phenomenon to the fact that 98% of books written about Native Americans in 1995 were written by authors who were not Native Americans. Since these authors are not Native American, it is hard for them to understand the tribal society and its cultural icons. In a November 2003 overview of the publishing of Native American children’s literacy, Lindsey found the number of books published about Native American was low and those published contained a litany of inaccuracies. Of the books, published between 2001 and 2002, the author reviewed two about Thanksgiving and the role of Native Americans. Of the two, one gave an inaccurate view of the initial meeting between the Wampanoag and Pilgrims and another showed how the Pilgrims and Native Americans were fixated on the turkey during the first Thanksgiving. In addition, Lindsey stated many authors did not use primary sources as a basis for books and there if often a combination of modern fables with stereotypically images of Native Americans. Unlike the number of books written about Asian Pacific Americans and Latino Americans, the number of books written by and about Native Americans has remained fairly steady in the last 5 years. Out of the approximate 5,000 children’s books published in 2005, 4 were written by Native Americans and 38 were written for Native Americans, compared to 2009 when 12 books were written by Native Americans and 33 were written about Native Americans (Cooperative Children’s Book Center, 2010).

Evolution of Culturally Authentic African America Children's Literature

The history of culturally-authentic literature for African America children has its roots in the newspapers and periodicals that were published by African America organizations and activists in 1827 (Bishop, 2007). With the creation in 1827 of the *Freedman's Journal*, the first African America newspaper, the press became the vehicle for educating African Americas about world events and community self-expression. Writers often addressed columns and articles to both parents and children as a way to educate, inform and promote positive values. In 1852, *The Christian Recorder* was established as a family newspaper for the “dissemination of Religion, Morality, Literature, and Science” (Bishop, 2007, p. 11). Targeting parents and their children, the periodical addressed issues of marriage, parenting, and the welfare of children, as well as creating columns such as “The Child's Cabinet” and “The Family Circle” specifically for children. Other nineteenth century newspapers such as *The Repository of Religion and Literature and Science and Art*, the *Rights of All*, and *The Colored American* also included specially designed columns and articles for African America children and youth.

One of the most prolific African American writers of children's literature during the late 1800s was Amelia Etta Hall Johnson. Johnson, the wife of a Baltimore minister, launched a monthly magazine called *The Joy* in 1887. The goal of the magazine was to provide a forum for African America writers to publish poems for children. A year later, Johnson established a second magazine, *The Ivy*, as a medium to focus on African America history and encourage African America children to read. Although revered for the publication of her periodicals, Johnson greatest achievement was becoming the first African America woman to create a novel for children. The novel, *Clarence and Corinne; or God's*

Way, was aimed toward intermediate readers and was created for Sunday school libraries. Although the book was not specifically marketed as African America children's literature, its underlying purpose was to fight against racist ideas that African Americans were unable to create literature (Bishop, 2007). In 1895, Paul Laurence Dunbar published the first book to actively feature African America folk culture and racial pride. The book, *Little Brown Baby*, was filled with dialect poems that were humorous, nonreligious, and sought to address everyday topics (Harris, 1990).

Along with positive images of African Americas, children's literature during the nineteenth century was also filled with vicious stereotypes. In *Elsie Dinsmore*, the author created characters that were loyal to the slave system and content with the lack of educational opportunities. Portraying African Americas as "dimwitted children who constantly grin, eat, misunderstand simple directions, and scratch their heads" (Harris, 1990, p. 542), the stereotypical children's book, *Epaminondas and his Auntie*, was published in 1907. Perhaps the greatest example of African America stereotyping in children's books was *The Story of Little African America Sambo* published in 1899. With illustrations of African America people with "protruding eyes and large, red lips [and] extremely dark skin" this book served as the precursor to current product advertising filled with images of the mammy, the pickaninny, and the Uncle Tom (Harris, 1990, p. 542).

The publication of African America children's literature from 1990 to 1930 served as the beginning of literature that was considered modern by today's standards. In 1920 and 1921, W.E.B. Du Bois published the first African America children's magazine called *The Brownies Book*. Believing that African America children should receive an education that included a strong foundation in reading, writing, and thinking, Du Bois created the magazine

as a form of social action. Through *The Brownies Book*, Du Bois sought to achieve seven goals. Along with entertainment, the magazine's goals were to make colored children realize that being colored is a normal, beautiful thing, to help children become familiar with the history and achievements of the Negro race, to show that other colored children had become beautiful, useful and famous people, to teach children the correct behaviors when interacting with white children, to instill pride in home and family, to point out the worthwhile things in life, and to inspire children toward racial uplift and sacrifice (Harris, 1990; Bishop, 2007). DuBois and other staff authors attempted to achieve these goals by including monthly articles on world news, social etiquette, African America children who achieved academic and creative success, folktales, biographies, and realistic fiction. In addition, *The Brownies Book* published nonstereotypical photographs of African America children, youth, and adults in ordinary activities such as going to the library or attending organizational meetings.

From 1940 to 1970, African America children's literature entered mainstream society. Beginning with the work of Arna Bontemps, literature for African America children shifted from explicit racial themes to a more assimilationist's philosophy. With his novels, biographies, poetry, histories, and folktales, Bontemps created text about African America experiences for all children regardless of race (Harris, 1990). Sims (1982) labeled books during this era as "social conscience" and "melting-pot" literature.

Social conscience books were books that addressed the conflicts between African Americas and whites and encouraged the groups to "develop empathy, sympathy, and tolerance for Afro-American children and their problems" (Sims, 1982, p. 17). Books that were in this category revolved around themes of school desegregation, how whites should behave when African America families moved into their neighborhoods, the "right way" to

achieve social goals, and teaching African America children how to coexist peacefully with whites. Sims cautioned that books labeled as social conscience literature could also be filled with stereotypes of African Americas, portray African Americas as outside agitators, and promote negative attitudes and assumptions about African Americas.

Books that were classified as melting-pot literature ignored all differences except the physical traits of skin color and racially related physical features. Many of these books were filled with plots and illustrations of African America characters that had adopted mainstream American cultural values. Mostly created as picture books, these books may or may not have African Americas as the main characters and generally took place in a racially integrated setting. Melting pot books also included illustrations of nuclear families, African America characters that spoke Standard English, and specific details connected to African America characters' racial identity. The goal of books in this category was to provide positive images of African America children and their families and to create a sense of universal experiences between African America and white children (Sims, 1982).

From 1970 to present day, African America children's literature has shifted from social conscience and melting pot literature to culturally conscious literature. Culturally conscious books represent and reflect the social and cultural traditions commonly associated with being African America in the United States and seek African America children as its primary audience. Books that fall into this category have African Americas as major characters, are told from an African America perspective, are set in African America communities or homes, and identify characters as African America based on physical descriptions, language, or cultural traditions (Sims, 1982). In addition, culturally conscious authors present historically-accurate portrayals of negative African America experiences in

America such as slavery and racial discrimination. Authors of culturally conscious books include Tom Feelings, Eloise Greenfield, Virginia Hamilton, John Steptoe, Patricia McKissack, and Mildred Taylor. These writers were among the first to create text that had a distinctive African America tone, an African America range of content, and that equaled or surpassed the literacy quality of general children's literature (Harris, 1990).

One of the contemporary issues impacting culturally-authentic children's literature is the access and availability of African America children's literature. In 1919, Macmillan was the first major publishing house to establish an independent children's department. Publishing less than 500 children's books in 1920, very few were created by African America writers or included realistic portrayals of African America characters (Bishop, 2007). In a 1970 survey of children's books, the number of books written by African Americans or written about the African America experience was about 200 books per year (Harris, 1990). In 2009, the Cooperative Children's Books Center reported that 83 books were written by African Americans and 157 books were written about African Americans out of the estimated 5,000 children's books published. McNair (2008) found that Scholastic Book Clubs, a huge retailer of children's books for classroom, school, and home use, included few books written or illustrated by authors of color. From September 2004 to June 2005, McNair discovered that only 34 books from authors and illustrators of color were found in primary-level book order forms compared to 600 books from white authors and illustrators.

With a relatively small amount of African America children's literature available, it is no wonder that educators and parents often find it difficult to include this type of literature in literacy experiences. Publishing companies such as Just Us Books, Children's Book Press,

and Lee and Low Books are attempting to meet the need by exclusively publishing books with multicultural themes and characters.

Purposes and Selection of Culturally Authentic Books

As stated earlier in this section, multicultural literature is important to all children regardless of race. Nieto (1992) suggests that literature about people of color serve at least five critical functions. First of all, multicultural literature provides knowledge or information about people of color. Multicultural literature can counteract inaccuracies, stereotypes, and omissions of histories and cultural traditions of people of color. Further, fiction and non-fiction text can give insights into cultural values, attitudes, customs, and ways of living that people of color experience. Another function of multicultural literature is to influence the way children and adults view their world by presenting varying viewpoints. Often times children's literature based on a historical event are written from a European point of view. Multicultural literature on the same event may be written from a different perspective that includes an overview of the people of color during the same time period.

According to Nieto (1992), the third function of literature written about people of color is to promote and develop an appreciation for differences. By including multicultural literature in classroom and school libraries, educators reinforce the message that diversity is natural and should be respected. Multicultural literature can also function as a means to critically examine and discuss the values, attitudes, and points of view that the literature conveys. Finally, multicultural literature functions to provide enjoyment and highlight the human experience.

Akanbi (2005) addresses the benefits of using multicultural materials during guided reading. By integrating this text into a reading program, teachers engage students in literacy

experiences that are meaningful, motivating, and allow African America students to make connections to home environments. Students begin to understand themselves and their families, as well as, valuing their own experiences. In addition, students learn about different cultural groups, their history, and their experiences.

Once books written or illustrated by or about African Americas are found, Bishop (2003) and Short and Fox (2003) elaborate on how to evaluate children's literature for cultural authenticity. Bishop defines cultural authenticity as "the aspects of the cultural, physical, or social environment the authors choose to emphasize...and the authenticating details" (p. 27-28). Authenticating details include the grammatical accuracy of the characters dialect and the specific traditions and values possessed by members of a cultural group. Short and Fox (2003) not only share Bishop's view on cultural authenticity, but provide criteria for evaluating culturally authenticity in children's books. First, culturally-authentic children's books should have accurate details and lack stereotypes and misrepresentations. This includes accurately portraying the news and time period of the book, cultural values or practices that are vital to the group, and sensitivity to the concerns of the group. Secondly, culturally-authentic children's books should contain illustrations that are representative of the cultural group and their values. Finally, culturally-authentic children's books should be filled with words or phrases from a specific culture. Words and phrases should be culturally sensitive and create strong images of the characters, settings, and themes found in the literature.

As research has unveiled that children want to read books that reflect their culture and contain characters to which they can relate, it is imperative that educators and parents choose quality text to utilize during literacy experiences. When looking for Afrocentric books for

children, Cheryl Willis Hudson (1997) lists several criteria for parents and teachers to consider when selecting children's literature. Hudson advocates looking for books that contain positive images of African America people and leave a lasting impression. Books should be accurate, factual, enjoyable, and authentic. In addition, books should include meaningful stories that promote African America values and lifestyles, as well as, clear and positive perspectives for people of color in the 21st century. Finally, books should be self-affirming, durable, and affordable and appropriate for the African America students who will read or listen to the book.

Similarly, Hefflin and Barksdale-Ladd (2003) provide specific characteristics for "good" African America children's literature. Using the work of Bishop (1997) and Banks (1991), Hefflin and Barksdale-Ladd suggest that books for African America children should include characters who are well developed and situated in realistic context, language that is authentic, realistic and portrays African America dialect appropriate for the character, illustrations that are accurate, ethnically sensitive, and well-done, and historically and ethnically accurate information.

It is important that all students, regardless of race, have access to quality multicultural literature. It is even more important that the adults who touch these children's lives monitor and discuss culturally-authentic children's literature with children and other community members. It is only through critical analysis of such literature that people of color can insure that their cultural values, beliefs, and attitudes are accurately and authentically displayed.

CHAPTER III

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the patterns of interaction and book choice within African American father/child book readings. Specifically, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. What texts did African American fathers and social fathers choose to read with their 4- to 5-year-old children and why did fathers and social fathers select these texts?
2. What types of interactions did African American fathers and social fathers engage in during interactive reading with text of their choice?

Research Design

Research questions were investigated using a mixed-methods case-study design with concurrent collection of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data included frequency counts of patterns of book choice and patterns of interactions within the reading practices of African American fathers and social fathers and their 4-to-5-year old children. Qualitative data was obtained by semi-structured interviews and case studies. Case-study design was selected for this study because it permitted the researcher to “Investigate the contemporary phenomenon within the real-life context; explore the unclear boundaries between phenomenon and context; and employ multiple sources of evidence” (Yin, 2002, p. 23). In this study, each father and social father was treated as an individual and unique case. Once individual cases were analyzed, and any unique features of that case were noted then all cases were collapsed into a collective case-study. Using a collective case-study design allowed the researcher to analyze commonalities and differences in reading interactions between all fathers and social fathers.

To honor the unique relationship of father/child dyads and their patterns of book interactions, each dyad was treated as a single-case. Although treated as individual case studies, each case underwent more than one level of analysis, thus creating an embedded case-study design (Yin, 2002). To combat a common pitfall of embedded design, focusing only on the individual units rather than returning to the larger unit of analysis, the researcher conducted a cross-case analysis and looked for patterns across all six case studies.

Participants

Participants in the study were six African American fathers and social fathers of children ages 4- to 5-years old and represented various socioeconomic classes and educational level. A term “father” refer to a residential or nonresidential biological or adoptive father (henceforth referred to as “father), while a “social father” (Bzostek, 2008) included a grandfather or other male fulfilling the paternal role for a friend’s child. Of the six participants, four were fathers and two were social fathers. Two of the fathers were residential, and two were non-residential. While social fathers could be residential or non-residential, the social fathers in this study were nonresidential. The selected number of fathers (4) versus social fathers (2) was a deliberate choice. The number of fathers selected was higher because approximately two-thirds of African American children have regular contact with their residential or nonresidential fathers. In comparison, about one-third of African American children only have contact with social fathers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008a). Fathers and social fathers were recruited through network or convenience sampling. This type of participant selection involved asking friends, co-workers, and participants to refer fathers and social fathers for the study (Merriam, 1998).

The age of the adult participants ranged from 28 to 63 and all child participants were 4- or 5-years-old when the study began. The gender of the children was equally divided across the six dyads. Three participants were male and three were female. Fathers were additionally classified based on whether their child was residential or nonresidential. If a father was classified as residential, then the child lived 100% of the time in the same household as the father. If a child lived less than 100% of the time in the same household, then the father was considered nonresidential. Three fathers in the study (Adam, Dale, and Max) were classified as residential, while the three remaining fathers (Darren, Timothy, and Winston) were classified as nonresidential. Darren is a biological father with shared custody of his son, while Timothy and Winston were social fathers who did not live with their child participant. All participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identity and assure confidentiality of the data.

Participants were selected based on their availability and their willingness to engage in an interactive reading sessions with their children three times a week, for six weeks. In addition, participants were bound by self-reported race and a willingness to submit audiotapes with recorded storybook book interaction once a week. Since the researcher was interested in the naturally occurring use of literacy within families, fathers and social fathers did not attend workshops on how to read various types of text to their children. Instead, fathers and social fathers were encouraged to read as they “normally would” to help the researcher get a better sense of what fathers do as they read to their children.

Below are the individual profiles of fathers/social fathers and the children in the study.

Adam and Michael. The dyad of Adam and Michael consisted of a biological father, Adam, and his 5-year-old son, Michael. Adam completed two-and-one half years of college, but stated that he did not finish due to financial restraints. He was working as a contractor at a local security company during the study. Adam reported that his mother frequently read to him and his siblings when he was young, but he rarely reads as an adult unless it is related to work or is part of his weekly religious readings. Adam reported that he prefers to read technical manuals, sports magazines, or his Bible. Although Adam stated that his wife does the majority of the reading with Michael because he is homeschooled by his wife, Adam reads with Michael occasionally during the bedtime routine. When they do read together, Adam said Michael does not have a genre preference as long the illustrations are engaging and bright. Adam views reading with Michael as an important part of Michael's literacy development and as a fun way to spend quality time with his son. In addition, Adam reported that books are prevalent in the home because of the home-school environment and the family's frequent trips to the public library.

Dale and Roman. The dyad of Dale and Roman included the biological father, Dale, and his four-year-old son, Roman. Dale holds a bachelor's and master's degree and works at a midwestern university as an information-technology specialist. Dale recounted that he could not remember a time as a child when his parents read with him. He attributed this to the fact that his parents both worked and that he was the youngest of four children. Dale said that he prefers to read books about language/linguistics or history, and often reads computer-programming manuals for work. He stated that he and his wife try to read to Roman one or two times a week, but that Roman's attention span is very short and he prefers to play rather than listen to a book. Dale reported that while Roman does not have a preference in the type

of text, when he reads with his father, Roman often remembers facts from books or from engaging in conversations with others. Dale viewed reading to Roman as a way to teach him to read. He repeatedly expressed concern that Roman was almost five and was not reading books independently even though he was very bright. In addition, Dale was worried that despite he and his wife's attempts to expose Roman to books more than one or two nights a week, it was a struggle to get Roman engaged in books any more than that due to his activity level.

Darren and Miles. The dyad of Darren and Miles included the biological father, Darren, and his four-year-old son, Miles. Darren has shared custody of Miles and Miles is at Darren's house three or four days of the week. Darren completed a year-and-a-half of college and owns his own business in the Midwest. Darren remembers seeing both of his parents reading books, newspapers, and magazines when he was a child, but could not recall a time when they read to him directly. When selecting reading material for himself, Darren prefers books about history or politics. On the days that Miles is at Darren's house, they read at least one book a night during the bedtime routine. Darren reported that they often read two or three books every night if they have time or Miles is not too tired. According to Darren, Miles prefers listening to expository text about cars, trucks, and trains, rather than narrative text. Darren views reading as a way to connect with Miles during their nights together and as a way to teach Miles the value and enjoyment of reading. Darren frequently buys books for Miles and takes him to the library a few times a month.

Max and Beth. The dyad of Max and Beth consisted of the biological father, Max, and his 4-year-old daughter, Beth. Max has a bachelor's and master's degree and is employed by a midwestern university where he works on a federally funded program. Max remembers

being read to several times a week by his mother before he began first grade. As he got older, he was encouraged by both parents to select reading as an activity in the afternoons and evenings. When selecting reading material for himself, Max prefers to read sports magazines or expository text about culture, politics, and leadership. Max reported that he reads to Beth every day as part of her bedtime routine. Max noted that while Beth enjoys expository text about planets and animals, she prefers narrative text about princesses and other female characters. Max views reading to Beth as a way to teach her the letters and words she needs to start reading independently. Max mentioned that the two of them spend at least an hour a day working on letters and sounds, words, and learning words in French or Spanish.

Timothy and Keara. The dyad of Timothy and Keara consisted of the social father, Timothy, and his friend's four-year-old daughter, Keara. Timothy is working on a bachelor's degree in legal studies and currently works for the State of Kansas. Timothy stated that reading has always been a part of life and that as a child his parents stressed reading from an early age. Timothy shared that he read individually with his parents three times a week, and as a group, he and his two siblings read four or five times a week with his parents. Because his family was very active in church, bible tales, Sunday School bulletins, and other spiritual text were prevalent in his childhood home. As an adult, Timothy said that he is an avid reader and enjoys socially conscious texts, text related to African American culture or history and commentaries. Timothy reported that he reads to Keara three times a week when he babysits her while her mother is at work. While Keara does not have a preference for text, according to Timothy she enjoys Dora The Explorer books and any text that includes adventure or animation. Timothy views reading to Keara means to transmit the idea that learning to read is

not just necessary, but reading allows a person to be exposed to ideas out of their everyday life and achieve their goals in life.

Winston and Sonia. The dyad of Winston and Sonia included the social father and his 4-year-old granddaughter, Sonia. Winston has a bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree in Education and works part-time at a university and part-time as a private educational consultant. He reported that his parents never read to him growing up and he disliked school until he met his sixth-grade teacher who taught him the value of education. Winston stated that he reads to Sonia every night during the weekends when she stays at his house. When selecting text to read, Winston reported that Sonia prefers books about Disney princesses, other Disney characters, and books about girls like *Fancy Nancy*. Winston believes reading to Sonia is important because it helps her navigate through life and become aware of world and local events. In addition, reading will help her communicate better with others.

Materials, Data Collection and Procedures

Book Selection. Each father-child dyad received twelve books that could be utilized during this study. The researcher initially chose narrative, expository, and poetry books that are interesting to 4- to 5- year-olds, contained positive images and references of African American males and African American families, and were high quality in both text and illustrations. The 20 to 25 books in each category were selected in several ways: examination of previous award winners (i.e. Coretta Scott King Award, Children's Choice Awards, Caldecott Medal Books, and American Library Association Children's Literature Awards), discussions about books with parents and educators, and the availability of books currently in publication. Once the titles in each category were obtained, the researcher personally asked African American friends and co-workers, who were fathers or social fathers, to help narrow

the book selections. This group was asked to read titles from each genre and identify their top six choices in each. Selections were tallied and a brief discussion between each of the six participants and myself about book selection was conducted. Once tallies and discussions were completed, the researcher identified the top four book choices in each genre, resulting in 12 titles that were given to fathers and social fathers as one source of read aloud materials to be used as the participated in the study (see Appendix A). Although twelve books were provided, participants were encouraged to read text from personal or public libraries during this study.

Reading logs. Data was collected from reading logs, transcripts of interactive book sessions, and semi-structured interviews. For each reading session, African American fathers and social fathers were asked to complete reading logs that included the title of the text, the setting where the interaction took place, the length of time of the interaction, who selected the text for the interaction, whether the text had been read before, and the source from which it came (see Appendix B). Winston was the only participant to complete the reading logs and return it at the end of the study. The remaining fathers and social fathers chose not to complete the log, they provided the information asked for on the reading logs at the beginning of videotaped session. When asked about the log in post-interviews, fathers expressed that it was difficult for them to keep track of the reading logs, that they did not want to take the time away from reading with their children by filling out the log, and that it was easier for them to supply the same information at the beginning of each videotaped session.

Interactive reading sessions. Each dyad was provided with a video camera to record their interactive reading sessions. Each father was asked to read and videotape interactive

reading sessions with his child three times a week for six weeks. Taking into account the schedules of fathers and social fathers, particularly those who were nonresidential, the length of time over which the sessions were recorded spanned six to twelve weeks. As anticipated, read aloud sessions lasted between 5-30 minutes. Fathers and social fathers determined the length of time they deemed appropriate for their child and was not suggested by the researcher. Videotaped readings were collected and downloaded once a week. This resulted in between 18-25 videotaped recordings per dyad during the course of the study. Of the 18 or more recordings per dyad, 9 recordings were selected for each dyad for transcription. One recording from each dyad was selected each of the six weeks. In addition, three recordings were selected per dyad, one from each two week span: weeks 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6. The selections were not totally random because the researcher was interested in studying the interactions of each adult-child dyad with the different genres. Of the nine transcripts, at least two of each genre was transcribed for each dyad. Thus, the researcher analyzed transcripts of 54 reading session recordings, 9 per dyad, for analysis and coding of categories of interaction.

Prior to initial coding, the researcher identified 16 codes, a combination of research-based pre-established codes (Hammer, Nimmo, Cohen, Draheim, & Johnson, 2005; Morrow & Smith, 1990) and a researcher created new code. The researcher and reading professor/researcher coded transcripts for interactions. The majority of codes were modified from Hammer, et al. and four additional codes from Morrow and Smith (1990) addressed the explanation of vocabulary, focus on text features, management of behaviors, and spontaneous comments. The researcher added a code that addressed making connections to text or illustrations. However, following an initial calculation of percentages for each code for each

participant and the recognition of small percentages within some codes, the 16 codes were collapsed where redundancy occurred resulting in the reduction of final codes to 12.

Initially there were 4 question-related codes: *Clarification Question*, *Prediction Question*, *Question About Text*, and *Question About Illustration*. After percentages for these four codes were calculated, and small percentages of interaction were found for three of the four question codes (see Table 2), the pre-established codes of *Clarification Question*, *Prediction Question*, *Question About Text* were collapsed into one general category for final analysis. This reduction was made due to small percentages in some of the *Questions* and *Explanation* codes.

Table 1

Clarification Question, Prediction Question, and Questions About Text

| | Adam | Dale | Darren | Max | Timothy | Winston |
|------------------------|------|------|--------|-----|---------|---------|
| Clarification question | 2% | 1% | 4% | 3% | 4% | 15% |
| Prediction question | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 3% | 3% |
| Question about text | 3% | 2% | 8% | 1% | 2% | 3% |
| Total | 6% | 4% | 13% | 5% | 9% | 21% |

While overall a low percentage of the participants' interactions were in the form of questions, two fathers had elevated percentages in the categories of *Clarification Question* and *Question About Text*. In the case of Winston, 15% of his questions during reading were clarification questions. This high percentage is attributed to Winston's repeated clarification questions during a reading session where his granddaughter retold the book *Tarzan* as she pretended to read. To better understand what she was describing in the book and how the

characters related to the plot, Winston repeatedly asked Sonia to clarify what she said. This resulted in a much higher total percentage for the three combined interactions, but since the other five fathers had such small percentages of *Clarification Question*, it was collapsed.

Much like Winston, Darren had a higher percentage than the other fathers in *Questions About Text*. Compared to averages of 1-3%, Darren asked questions about text 8% of the time, much greater than the averages in this category of other participants. This was due to the fact that towards the end of the six-week period, he increased the number of questions he asked his son, Miles, about letters and words in text. In an effort to point out words in print and call his son's attention to words supported by the illustration, Darren began to focus heavily on text, letters, and words.

Along with the three previously mentioned codes being collapsed, the codes for *Explanation of Illustration*, *Explanation of Text*, and *Explanation of Vocabulary* also were collapsed into one category for the final analysis (see Table 3). With a range of 1-7% for each of the three codes among the fathers and social fathers, the researcher decided to combine them into one code for final analysis: *Explanation of Illustration, Text, and Vocabulary*.

Table 2

Explanation of Illustration, Text and Vocabulary

| | Adam | Dale | Darren | Max | Timothy | Winston |
|-----------------------------|------|------|--------|-----|---------|---------|
| Explanation of illustration | 3% | 6% | 5% | 6% | 7% | 3% |
| Explanation of text | 2% | 4% | 2% | 4% | 3% | 7% |
| Explanation of vocabulary | 3% | 2% | 1% | 4% | 1% | 0% |
| Total | 8% | 12% | 8% | 14% | 11% | 10% |

Labels of the category, a definition of each category, and an example of each was used as a part of the training and as transcripts are coded to support and develop reliability. To ensure interrater reliability, the researcher and a reading professor/researcher coded 10% of the transcripts from each genre. First, they did several transcripts together using only narrative transcripts to allow time to ask one another questions as they arose. Once they were in agreement, they individually coded 10% of the transcripts then compared and tallied disagreements (interrater reliability) and came to agreement on disagreements. The researcher coded the remaining narrative transcripts and this process was repeated for both expository transcripts and poetry transcripts. Across all the practice transcripts, the interrater reliability of expository text, narrative text, and poetry was 92%, 94%, 98% respectively. This resulted in an overall interrater reliability of 95%. Frequency counts of codes were then converted into percentages and used to identify patterns of interaction within and between groups of fathers and social fathers. While the present study sought to investigate the interactions of fathers during book reading, an analysis of children's interactions also was conducted to fully understand what occurred during book reading sessions.

Semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted before and following the completion of the study. Preresearch literacy-profile questions focused on the literacy of both the father/social father and their child (see Appendix D). The preresearch interview questions were selected and based on questions used by Johnson (2010) during her research of family culture and literacy within an African American family and because the questions were broad and allowed for open-ended answers by fathers and social fathers. This allowed the researcher to create a literacy profile for each father and social father (Taylor, 1983). In addition, interviews provided the researcher with information for the development

of narrative descriptions of each case. Preresearch interviews were conducted at a location comfortable for fathers and social fathers (i.e. home, coffee shop, or office). Once the interview was completed, materials (books, video cameras, and tripods) were distributed and procedures for videotaping were discussed. Post-research literacy profile interview questions concentrated on fathers' and social fathers' experiences during the study; what benefits, if any, they saw as a result of the study; and any revisions in reading patterns fathers and social fathers made as a result of the study (see Appendix E). Once again, end-of-the-study interviews were conducted in a comfortable environment. The semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher, videotaped, and transcribed for analysis. The transcribed data obtained from the semi-structured pre- and post-interviews was analyzed using the constant-comparative method (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Common themes within cases, as well as across cases, were identified by the researcher and a colleague with a Ph.D. during analysis and incorporated into the quantitative data collected during fathers/social father's interactions with children.

Data Sources and Data Analysis Used to Address Research Questions

Data from reading logs or videotaped log-related information (frequency counts of books selected and total books read by case and across cases) were converted into a percentage. Qualitative information obtained from semi-structured interviews related to selection, if found, was used to address the first research question, "What texts do African American fathers and social fathers choose to read with their 4- to 5-year-old children and why do fathers and social fathers select these texts?"

Coded transcripts of interactions were the primary source of data used to address the second research question, "What types of interactions do African American fathers and social

fathers engage in during interactive book reading?” In addition, if themes arose from the semi-structured interviews related to types of interaction, that data was also used to address this question.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the patterns of interaction and book choice within African American father/child book readings. Specifically, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. What texts did African American fathers and social fathers choose to read with their 4- to 5-year-old children and why did fathers and social fathers select these texts?
2. What types of interactions did African American fathers and social fathers engage in during interactive book reading?

As explained in detail in Chapter 3, the quantitative data was placed into 12 major categories of interaction for fathers and social father and 10 major categories of interaction for children. The child data was used only to support the understanding of fathers' interactions. The percentages listed in the tables and figures are rounded to the nearest whole number thus not always resulting in a total percentage of 100.

For ease of communication, the term “fathers” will be used in the following sections to refer to all adult participants in the study. When the results of the two subgroups are discussed, the terms “fathers and social fathers” will be used. In this study, each father was treated as an individual and unique case. Once individual cases were analyzed and any unique features of that case were noted, then all cases were collapsed into a collective case-study. Using a collective-case-study design allowed the researcher to analyze commonalities and differences in reading interactions between all fathers and social fathers. In the next section, the results of individual father/child dyads will be discussed, followed by the results

across cases addressed by research question. Information collapsed across all six fathers will be presented first, then trailed by subgroups (fathers and social fathers).

Individual Father-Child Dyads

Adam and Michael

As outlined in Table 3, when Adam read with Michael, expository text was selected 33% of the time, narrative 44% of the time, and poetry 22% of the time. During his pre-interview, Adam reported that Michael enjoyed books with colorful and engaging illustrations and was currently fascinated with *Veggie Tales* books such as *The Spaghetti Western: A Lesson In Showing Mercy* by Doug Peterson (2006) and *The Case of the Lost Temper: A Lesson in Self-Control* by Doug Peterson, John Trent and Greg Hardin (2006). This preference was reflected in the quantitative findings for Adam. He read more narrative text during the study, as Michael selected this type of text more often than the other genres. In terms of interactions, the largest percentage for Adam was in *Label or Comments About Text or Illustrations* (19%). This category was followed by three others: *Question About Illustration* and *Prompt* at 14% apiece and *Acknowledge Child* at 13%.

Table 3

Selection and Interaction Data for Adam

| Expository 33% | Narrative 44% | Poetry 22% |
|---|---------------|------------|
| Label or comments about text or illustration (L) | | |
| | | 19% |
| Question about Illustration (H) | | |
| | | 14% |
| Prompt (L) | | |
| | | 14% |
| Acknowledge child (L) | | |
| | | 13% |
| Connection to text or illustration (H) | | |
| | | 10% |
| Explanation of illustration, text, or vocabulary (H) | | |
| | | 8% |
| Correction of child's utterance (L) | | |
| | | 7% |
| Question for clarification, prediction, or about text (H) | | |
| | | 6% |
| Response to child's question (L) | | |
| | | 4% |
| Spontaneous comment about text or illustration (L) | | |
| | | 3% |
| Management of behavior (L) | | |
| | | 2% |
| Expansion of child's utterance (H) | | |
| | | 1% |

Dale and Roman

Table 4 summarizes the data collected on Dale. Dale read expository (32%), narrative (36%), and poetry (32%) in approximately equal amounts, about one-third of the time. This was clearly reflected in the comments Dale made in his pre-interview related to genre preference. Dale stated that Roman had no preference about reading material, but enjoyed reading everything from books on geography or states of matter to Thomas the Train and Dr. Seuss books. Dale had the largest percentage of interactions in two categories: *Label or Comments About Text or Illustrations* and *Question About Illustration* with 20%. *Acknowledge Child* closely followed this category with 18% of Dale's total interactions.

Table 4

Selection and Interaction Data for Dale

| Expository 32% | Narrative 36% | Poetry 32% |
|---|---------------|------------|
| Label or comments about text or illustration (L) | | 20% |
| Question about Illustration (H) | | 20% |
| Acknowledge child (L) | | 18% |
| Explanation of illustration, text, or vocabulary (H) | | 12% |
| Connection to text or illustration (H) | | 10% |
| Spontaneous comment about text or illustration (L) | | 6% |
| Question for clarification, prediction, or about text (H) | | 4% |
| Correction of child's utterance (L) | | 4% |
| Response to child's question (L) | | 3% |
| Prompt (L) | | 1% |
| Expansion of child's utterance (H) | | 1% |
| Management of behavior (L) | | 0% |

Darren and Miles

Data collected for Darren is disclosed in Table 5. Unlike the majority of the fathers in the study, Darren read expository text (44%) more than narrative text (36%) and poetry (20%). During interviews, Darren revealed that Miles preferred books about cars, trucks, trains, and other vehicles and that his favorite book was *Mighty Machines* by Stephen Angel (2007). When participating in book reading sessions, Darren had the highest interaction in the category of *Acknowledge Child* (16%), followed by *Question for Clarification*, *Prediction, or About Text* (13%), and *Label or Comment About Text or Illustration* and *Question About Illustration* at 12% each.

Table 5

Selection and Interaction Data for Darren

| Expository 44% | Narrative 36% | Poetry 20% |
|---|---------------|------------|
| Acknowledge child (L) | | 16% |
| Question for clarification, prediction, or about text (H) | | 13% |
| Label or comment about text or illustration (L) | | 12% |
| Question about illustration (H) | | 12% |
| Connection to text or illustration (H) | | 11% |
| Explanation of illustration, text, or vocabulary (H) | | 8% |
| Prompt (L) | | 8% |
| Response to child's question (L) | | 7% |
| Spontaneous comment about text or illustration (L) | | 5% |
| Correction to child's utterance (L) | | 4% |
| Management of behavior (L) | | 2% |
| Expansion of child's utterance (H) | | 1% |

Max and Beth

Table 6 summarizes the data for Max. Similar to Dale, Max read books about equally across all genres. He read expository (38%) the most, followed by narrative and poetry with 31% each. Max reported that Beth's interest in books often depended on the topics she was learning at pre-kindergarten such as planets or aquatic life. In addition, he reported that when he selects books to read to Beth he prefers to read expository text. Max highest interaction during book reading sessions was *Question About Illustration* (23%), which was higher than any of the other fathers for this category. The next highest percentage of interactions for Max was *Acknowledge Child* (18%).

Table 6

Selection and Interaction Data for Max

| Expository 38% | Narrative 31% | Poetry 31% |
|---|---------------|------------|
| Question about illustration (H) | | 23% |
| Acknowledge child (L) | | 18% |
| Label or comment about text or illustration (L) | | 14% |
| Explanation of illustration, text, or vocabulary (H) | | 14% |
| Connection to text or illustration (H) | | 5% |
| Management of behavior (L) | | 5% |
| Question for clarification, prediction, or about text (H) | | 5% |
| Correction of child's utterance (L) | | 5% |
| Spontaneous comment about text or illustration (L) | | 4% |
| Response to child's question (L) | | 3% |
| Expansion of child's utterance (H) | | 3% |
| Prompt (L) | | 1% |

Timothy and Keara

As displayed in Table 7, contrary to other fathers, Timothy read expository text the least often (27%) with and narrative text and poetry at 40% and 33% respectively. This preference for poetry was confirmed in his pre-interview, when Timothy mentioned that he enjoyed reading and writing poetry as well as performing his poetry to an audience. He recounted that Keara seemed to enjoy when he read books that rhymed or were lyrical in nature, and that her favorite poetry book during the study was *Please, Baby, Please* by Spike Lee and Tanya Lewis Lee (2006). Timothy had the highest number of interactions in *Label or Comment About Text or Illustration* (24%). This category was followed by *Question About Illustration* (18%) and *Acknowledge Child* (15%).

Table 7

Selection and Interaction Data for Timothy

| Expository 27% | Narrative 40% | Poetry 33% |
|---|---------------|------------|
| Label or comment about text or illustration (L) | | 24% |
| Question about illustration (H) | | 18% |
| Acknowledge child (L) | | 15% |
| Explanation of illustration, text, or vocabulary (H) | | 11% |
| Question for clarification, prediction, or about text (H) | | 9% |
| Connection to text or illustration (H) | | 7% |
| Response to child's question (L) | | 4% |
| Expansion of child's utterance (H) | | 4% |
| Correction of child's utterance (L) | | 3% |
| Spontaneous comment about text or illustration (L) | | 3% |
| Prompt (L) | | 1% |
| Management of behavior (L) | | 1% |

Winston and Sonia

Table 8 displays the data collected for Winston. Winston overwhelmingly read narrative text (61%), more than expository text (17%) or poetry (22%). When interviewed, Winston reflected that Sonia preferred to listen to narratives about princesses, girls, and uplifting topics. In addition, Winston reported that Sonia was learning to retell stories, so he often had to ask her to clarify something she said during her retellings. Much like other fathers in the study, the findings on Winston reveal that the peak of his interactions were in the category of *Label or Comments About Text or Illustration* with 23%. This category was followed closely by *Question for Clarification, Prediction, or About Text* (21%) and *Acknowledge Child* (18%).

Table 8

Selection and Interaction Data for Winston

| Expository 17% | Narrative 61% | Poetry 22% |
|---|---------------|------------|
| Label or comment about text or illustration (L) | | 23% |
| Question for clarification, prediction, or about text (H) | | 21% |
| Acknowledge child (L) | | 18% |
| Question about illustration (H) | | 10% |
| Explanation of illustration, text, or vocabulary (H) | | 10% |
| Connection to text or illustration (H) | | 5% |
| Spontaneous comment about text or illustration (L) | | 5% |
| Response to child's question (L) | | 2% |
| Correction of child's utterance (L) | | 2% |
| Prompt (L) | | 2% |
| Management of behavior (L) | | 2% |
| Expansion of child's utterance (H) | | 1% |

Research Question One: Selection of Text

Data from tallies of book selections as well as videotaped observation served as the primary sources of data for this question. In addition, information related to book selection obtained in pre- and post-interviews served as an additional source. Throughout the study, the books fathers read were easily divided into three genre categories: expository, narrative, and poetry.

While this research question sought to determine what types of text fathers selected to read with their children, during the analysis of video tapes and through post-interviews, it was determined that the children were overwhelmingly responsible for the selection of books that fathers read during the sessions. Of the total 111 books read overall, fathers selected which books to read only 5% of the time. Table 9 presents the total number of books each father read in each genre. Of the total number of books selected, 32% were expository, 41% were narrative, and 26% were poetry.

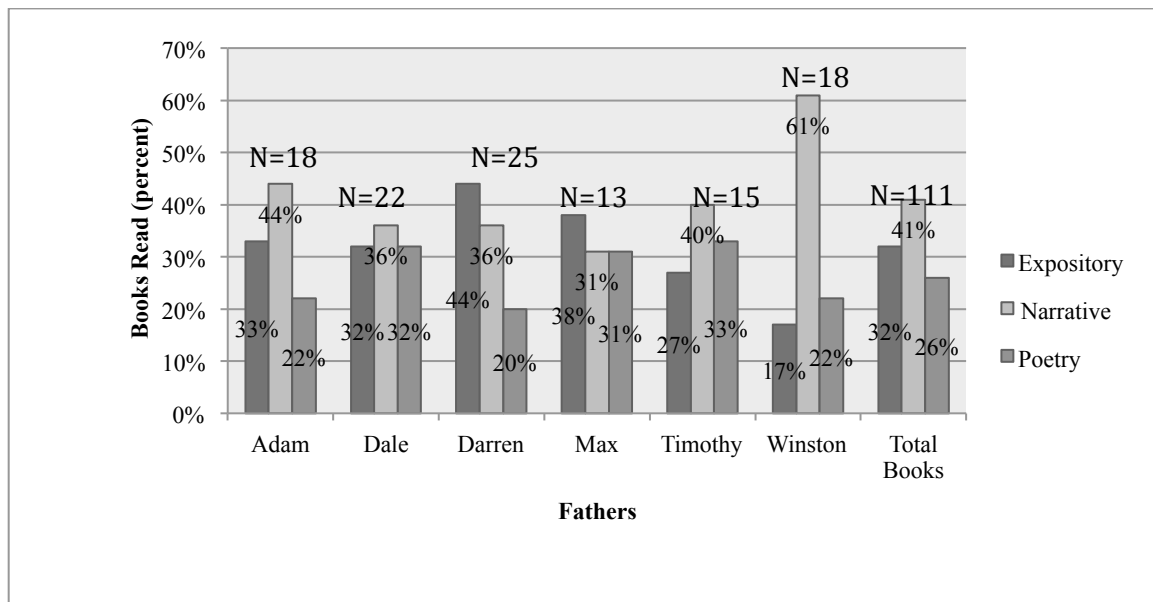
Table 9

Number and Percentage of Books Across Genres

| | Adam | Dale | Darren | Max | Timothy | Winston | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| Expository | 6 (33%) | 7 (32%) | 11 (44%) | 5 (38%) | 4 (27%) | 3 (17%) | 36 (32%) |
| Narrative | 8 (44%) | 8 (36%) | 9 (36%) | 4 (31%) | 6 (40%) | 11 (61%) | 46 (41%) |
| Poetry | 4 (22%) | 7 (32%) | 5 (20%) | 4 (31%) | 5 (33%) | 4 (22%) | 29 (26%) |
| Total Number of Books | 18 | 22 | 25 | 13 | 15 | 18 | 111 |

While the range of the total number of books varied from 13-25 over the six-week period, only Dale and Darren read more than one book during a session, thus resulting in a slightly higher number of books read. As noted in Table 9, the number of books read was fairly evenly distributed across the three genres. Fathers typically read expository text (32%) approximately one-third of the time, however they read narrative (41%) slightly more and poetry (26%) slightly less than one-third of the time. While two fathers read expository text more frequently than narrative, poetry was consistently the least often read genre across all fathers. Figure 1 represents the percentage of books read in each genre category by each father.

Figure 1. Percentages of book selection for all fathers across all genres.

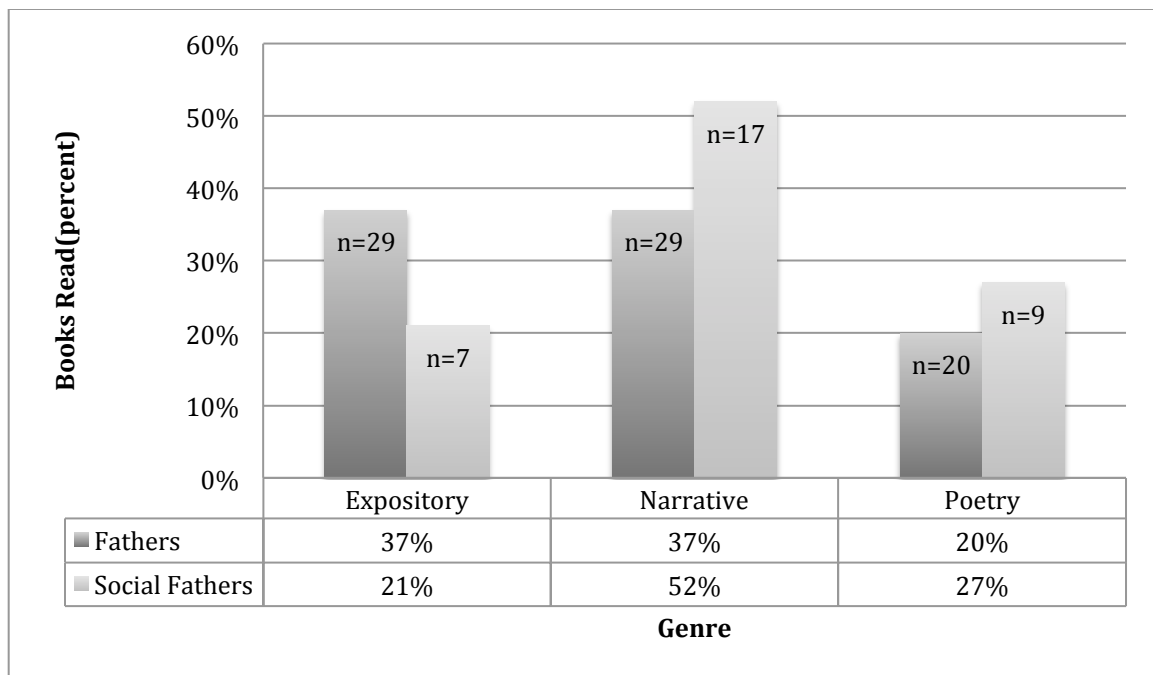


Three interesting aspects to note in Figure 1 are the reading patterns of Darren, Max, and Winston. Unlike the other fathers, Darren and Max read expository text more than narrative text. Darren read expository text 44% of the time compared to narrative text (36%). Additionally, Max read expository text 38% of the time compared to narrative text (31%).

While Winston followed the trend of reading narrative text more often than the other genres, the percentage of his books selections being narrative was much greater than that of the other fathers. Compared with an average of 41% of narrative text accounting for the books read, Winston’s narrative text selection constituted 61% of the total books he read. The high number of narrative text Winston read aligned with the statement he made during the pre-interview regarding the types of books his granddaughter, Sonia, enjoyed. “Sonia enjoys story books the most. Books about Disney princesses and books that tell stories.”

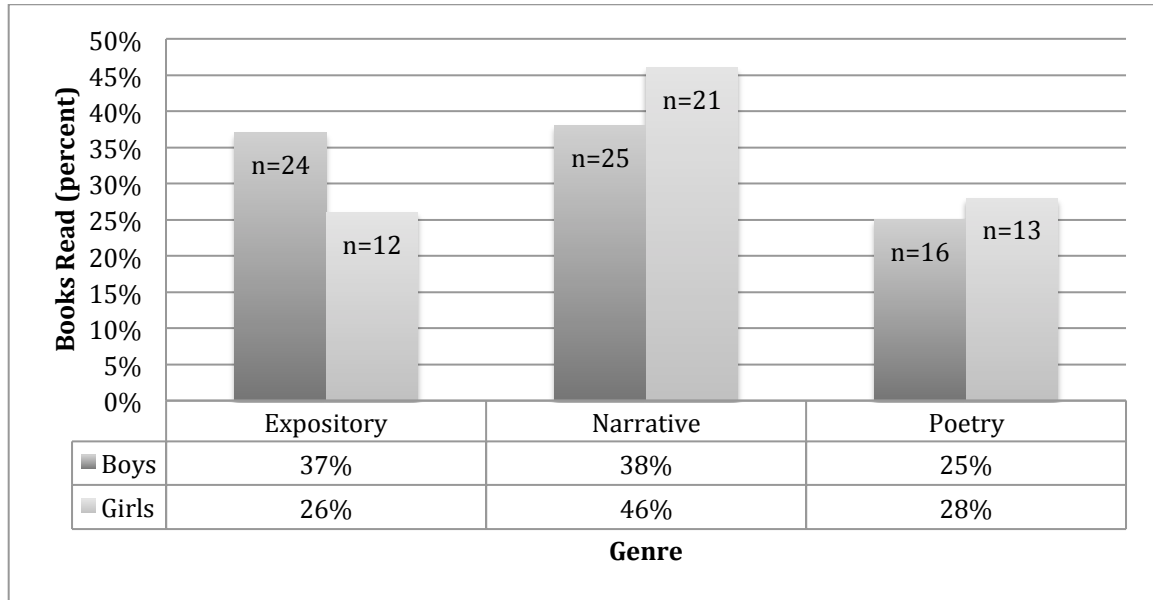
When comparing the subgroups of fathers and social fathers and the types of books their children selected for them to read, it is interesting to note that while the percentage of books within each genre was relatively the same for the six fathers, there was a difference between the number of expository, poetry and narrative text social fathers read (Figure 2). The percentage of narrative text (52%) read by social fathers was approximately twice that of expository and poetry text.

Figure 2. Number and percentage of books comparing fathers and social fathers.



Since primarily the children selected books, the researcher chose to examine the types of text they selected and to do so based on their gender (Figure 3) to see if gender may explain the selection results to a degree. When looking at the book selection of the three boys compared to the three girls, the percentage of poetry selected was fairly equal at 25% and 28% respectively. However, boys selected expository text 11% more often than girls. Conversely, girls selected narrative text 8% more often than boys. When reviewing the data of fathers with male children (Adam, Dale, Darren) compared to fathers of female children (Max, Timothy, Winston), the combined percentage of fathers reading expository text was greater for the fathers with male children. This is partly due to Darren who stated in his pre-interview that his son, Miles, “wants to read anything that deals with cars, trucks, planes, trains and always has since he was a baby.” Furthermore, Adam and Dale read expository text approximately one-third of the time during book reading sessions. In terms of narrative text, fathers of female children read this genre more often than fathers of male children. While fathers overall read more narrative text as mentioned earlier, the high percentage of narrative text (46%) read to girls can be attributed to the large number of narrative text (61% of selections) Winston read to his granddaughter, Sonia.

Figure 3. Number and percentage of books selected by boys and girls.



Research Question Two: Interactions During Book Reading

While the original intent of the researcher was to report only on fathers, the following section will present major findings for both the fathers and children. Even though the study focused on fathers, the researcher examined the children's responses as well due to the potential for understanding the fathers' interactions. As explained in detail in Chapter 3, transcripts of book interactions were coded into 12 major categories for the fathers and 10 for the children. The resulting data was used to address research question two. The percentages listed in the tables are rounded to the nearest whole number thus not always resulting in a total percentage of 100.

Fathers' Interactions

Data for each of the 12 final codes were combined across all genres (expository, narrative, and poetry) to obtain a total percentage of each code for each father. Descriptors for the fathers' codes and examples of the fathers' interactions can be found in Appendix C. As noted in Table 10, across all participants the category with the largest percentage of interactions (19%) was *Label or Comment About Text or Illustration*. This category was closely followed by two others with 16% each: *Question About Illustrations* and *Acknowledge Child*. The two collapsed categories (*Question for Clarification, Prediction, and About Text* and *Explanation of Illustration, Text, and Vocabulary*) each accounted for 11% of the interactions. The category of *Connection to Text or Illustration* comprised 8% of the interactions across all genres. Finally, a small percentage of the interactions were made in the remaining six categories. Four of the six (*Response to Child's Question, Prompt, Spontaneous Comment About Text or Illustration, and Correction of Child's Utterance*) each accounted for 4% of the interaction total. The lowest percent of total interactions (2% each) were in the categories of *Expansion of Child's Utterances* and *Management of Behavior*.

Although not an explicit part of the research questions, the researcher, along with a reading professor/researcher, also classified the level of interactions as higher or lower order skills in order to further examine the interactions. Five of the 12 interactions were identified as higher order, and seven as lower-order skills. Interactions considered higher order are denoted with (H) after the code name, and those considered lower order are denoted with (L) after the code name. Of the codes ranked highest in book interactions of fathers across all genres, four of the six are classified as higher-level skills (*Question about Illustration; Question for Clarification, Prediction, or About Text; Explanation of Illustration, Text, or*

Vocabulary; and Connection to Text or Illustration). Conversely, only one higher-order category, *Connection to Text or Illustration*, is among the lower six interaction totals.

Table 10

Book Reading Interactions of Fathers Across All Genres

| | Adam | Dale | Darren | Max | Tim. | Win. | Total |
|---|------|------|--------|-----|------|------|-------|
| Label or comments about text or illustration (L) | 19% | 20% | 12% | 14% | 24% | 23% | 19% |
| Question about illustration (H) | 14% | 20% | 12% | 23% | 18% | 10% | 16% |
| Acknowledge child (L) | 13% | 18% | 16% | 18% | 15% | 18% | 16% |
| Question for clarification, prediction, or about text (H) | 6% | 4% | 13% | 5% | 9% | 21% | 11% |
| Explanation of illustration, text, or vocabulary (H) | 8% | 12% | 8% | 14% | 11% | 10% | 11% |
| Connection to text or illustration (H) | 10% | 10% | 11% | 5% | 7% | 5% | 8% |
| Response to child's question (L) | 4% | 3% | 7% | 3% | 4% | 2% | 4% |
| Prompt (L) | 14% | 1% | 8% | 1% | 1% | 2% | 4% |
| Spontaneous comment about text or illustration (L) | 3% | 6% | 5% | 4% | 3% | 5% | 4% |
| Correction of child's utterance (L) | 7% | 4% | 4% | 5% | 3% | 2% | 4% |
| Expansion of child's utterance (H) | 1% | 1% | 1% | 3% | 4% | 1% | 2% |
| Management of behavior (L) | 2% | 0% | 2% | 5% | 1% | 2% | 2% |

When comparing genres individually, the percentage of interactions between the genres varied (Table 11). In expository text, fathers had the greatest interaction percentage in *Question About Illustration*, *Response to Child's Question*, *Spontaneous Comment About Text Or Illustration*, and *Management of Behavior*. When reading narrative text, fathers had the highest percentage of interactions in the categories of *Label and Comment About Text or Illustrations*, *Acknowledge Child*, *Question of Clarification, Prediction, or About Text*,

Explanation of Illustration, Text, or Vocabulary, Prompt, Correction of Child's Utterance, and *Expansion of Child's Utterance*. Finally, when interacting with poetry, fathers' behaviors fell into the category of *Connection to Text or Illustration* more than in expository or narrative text.

Table 11

Book Reading Interactions of Fathers in Expository, Narrative, and Poetry

| | Expository | Narrative | Poetry | Total |
|---|------------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Label or comments about text or illustration (L) | 37 (13%) | 125 (44%) | 122 (43%) | 284 |
| Question about illustration (H) | 117 (47%) | 79 (32%) | 53 (21%) | 249 |
| Acknowledge child (L) | 85 (35%) | 106 (43%) | 55 (22%) | 246 |
| Question for clarification, prediction, or about text (H) | 52 (33%) | 79 (49%) | 29(18%) | 160 |
| Explanation of illustration, text, or vocabulary (H) | 71 (43%) | 74 (45%) | 20 (12%) | 165 |
| Connection to text or illustration (H) | 23 (20%) | 42 (36%) | 52 (44%) | 117 |
| Response to child's question (L) | 26 (44%) | 25 (42%) | 8 (24%) | 59 |
| Prompt (L) | 22 (34%) | 43(66%) | 0 (0%) | 65 |
| Spontaneous comment about text or illustration (L) | 31 (47%) | 26 (39%) | 9 (14%) | 66 |
| Correction of child's utterance (L) | 28 (44%) | 30 (48%) | 5 (8%) | 63 |
| Expansion of child's utterance (H) | 10 (33%) | 14 (47%) | 6 (20%) | 30 |
| Management of behavior (L) | 17 (50%) | 12 (35%) | 5 (15%) | 34 |
| Total Interaction By Genre | 509 (34%) | 623 (42%) | 350 (24%) | 1482 |

As discussed in Chapter 3, after modifying codes from previous research 10 codes were established to capture children's interactions during reading session. Descriptors for the children's codes and examples of the children's interactions can be found in Appendix D. As revealed in Table 12, children overwhelmingly responded to fathers' *Questions About Text or*

Illustration more than any other category. This code captured 33% of the total interactions compared to all other codes, which ranged from 3-15%. This is partly due to the high response rates of Beth, Keara, and Sonia. Compared to their peers, these girls responded to almost twice as many questions from their fathers as other children.

Table 12

Book Reading Interactions of Children Across Genres

| | Michael | Roman | Miles | Beth | Keara | Sonia | Total |
|--|---------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Respond to father's question about text/illus. | 19% | 23% | 25% | 41% | 40% | 40% | 33% |
| Label or comment about text | 19% | 15% | 11% | 20% | 15% | 12% | 15% |
| Label or comment about illustrations | 2% | 12% | 6% | 7% | 14% | 19% | 10% |
| Spontaneous comment about text or illustration | 10% | 5% | 11% | 11% | 11% | 10% | 10% |
| Imitate father | 6% | 21% | 4% | 11% | 7% | 2% | 8% |
| Respond to father's prompt | 20% | 2% | 16% | 2% | 1% | 40% | 8% |
| Question about text | 9% | 3% | 10% | 3% | 2% | 5% | 6% |
| Connection to text or illustration | 11% | 8% | 7% | 0% | 2% | 4% | 5% |
| Question about illustration | 2% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 6% | 3% | 4% |
| Call attention to text or illustrations | 3% | 7% | 5% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 3% |

When the interaction data of children is further analyzed across the individual genres, a difference in interactions by genre can be found (Table 13). When interacting with expository text, children engaged in the categories of *Label or Comment About Text*, *Imitate Father*, *Question About Text*, and *Call Attention to Text or Illustration* more than in narrative and poetry text. During narrative text readings, the highest percentage of interactions occurred during the categories of *Respond to Father's Question About Text and Illustration*, *Label or Comment About Illustration*, *Spontaneous Comment About Text or Illustration*, *Respond to Father's Prompt*, and *Question About Illustrations*. The one category of interaction that children engaged in most often while listening to poetry read aloud was *Connection to Text or Illustration*.

Table 13

Book Reading Interactions of Children in Expository, Narrative, and Poetry

| | Expository | Narrative | Poetry | Total |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Respond to father's question about text/illus. | 103 (28%) | 172 (47%) | 91 (25%) | 366 |
| Label or comment about text | 96 (57%) | 35 (21%) | 37 (22%) | 168 |
| Label or comment about illustrations | 23 (20%) | 82 (71%) | 10 (9%) | 115 |
| Spontaneous comment about text or illustration | 36 (32%) | 46 (41%) | 29 (26%) | 111 |
| Imitate father | 34 (40%) | 18 (21%) | 33 (39%) | 85 |
| Respond to father's prompt | 23 (27%) | 62 (73%) | 0 (0%) | 85 |
| Question about text | 32 (52%) | 25 (40%) | 5 (8%) | 62 |
| Connection to text or illustration | 12 (22%) | 17 (31%) | 26 (47%) | 55 |
| Question about illustration | 12 (27%) | 30 (67%) | 3 (7%) | 45 |
| Call attention to text or illustrations | 14 (48%) | 9 (31%) | 6 (21%) | 29 |
| Total Interaction By Genre | 385 (34%) | 496 (44%) | 240 (21%) | 1121 |

Fathers and Social Fathers: Interaction Patterns Differences

In order to determine if there were differences between the reading interactions of fathers and social fathers, the data were examined by the two subgroups. The subgroup of *Fathers* included four fathers: Adam, Dale, Darren, and Max. The subgroup of *Social Fathers* included two fathers: Timothy and Winston. As observed in Table 14, eight of the 10 interaction categories were consistent between the two subgroups. However in two categories, *Label or Comment About Text or Illustration* and *Question for Clarification, Prediction, and About Text* the difference between the two subgroups was greater. In both categories, the social fathers engaged in those types of interactions more than fathers.

Table 14

Comparison of Interactions Among Fathers and Social Fathers Across Genres

| | Fathers | Social Fathers |
|---|---------|----------------|
| Label or comment about text or illustration (L) | 15% | 24% |
| Question about illustration (H) | 18% | 14% |
| Acknowledge child (L) | 16% | 16% |
| Question for clarification, prediction, or about text (H) | 8% | 15% |
| Explanation of illustration, text, or vocabulary (H) | 11% | 11% |
| Connection to text or illustration (H) | 9% | 6% |
| Prompt (L) | 6% | 2% |
| Spontaneous comment about text or illustration (L) | 5% | 4% |
| Correction of child's utterance (L) | 5% | 3% |
| Response to child's question (H) | 4% | 3% |
| Management of behavior (L) | 3% | 2% |
| Expansion of child's utterance (H) | 2% | 2% |

Comparatively, when you look at the interactions of the children divided into the subgroups of *Children of Fathers* versus *Children of Social Fathers* two interesting findings emerge. The subgroup of *Children of Fathers* included four children: Michael, Roman, Miles, and Beth. The subgroup of *Children of Social Fathers* included two children: Keara and Sonia. Children of social fathers interacted with *Respond to Questions About Text or Illustration* 40% of time as compared to 29% by children of fathers. In addition, children of social fathers *Label or Comment About Illustrations* 17% of the time compared to 7% by children of fathers. See Table 15 for presentation of this data.

Table 15

Comparison of Interactions Among Children of Fathers and Social Fathers Across Genres

| | Children of Fathers | Children of Social Fathers |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Respond to father's question about text/illus. | 29% | 40% |
| Label or comment about text | 16% | 13% |
| Label or comment about illustrations | 7% | 17% |
| Spontaneous comment about text or illustration | 10% | 10% |
| Imitate father | 10% | 4% |
| Respond to father's prompt | 10% | 3% |
| Question about text | 6% | 4% |
| Connection to text or illustration | 6% | 3% |
| Question about illustration | 4% | 4% |
| Call attention to text or illustrations | 3% | 1% |

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

This study explored the selection and reading interactions of fathers and social fathers and a their 4- or 5-years old child participant through two research questions:

1. What texts did African American fathers and social fathers choose to read with their 4- to 5-year-old children and why did fathers and social fathers select these texts?
2. What types of interactions did African American fathers and social fathers engage in during interactive book reading?

Data was collected from videotaped reading sessions and included quantitative data from the frequency counts of patterns of book choice and adult-child interactions within the interactive reading practices. Qualitative data was obtained by semi-structured interviews. Data from individual fathers-dyads, as well as data across all fathers and children, were analyzed for patterns of selection and reading interactions patterns. The researcher acknowledged the individual nature of the father/child dyads in terms of selection and interactions. However, when examining data across the dyads some patterns were evident. Certain genres were selected more often than others and some types of interaction occurred more often than others. When examining text selection across all fathers, the researcher found that fathers selected narrative text more often than expository text or poetry. Furthermore, while the individual patterns of the father/child dyads varied during interactions, overall, fathers engaged in the interactions of *Label or Comment About Text or Illustrations*, *Question About Illustration*, and *Acknowledge Child* more often than other categories of interactions.

Discussion

The components of text selection and interactions between African American fathers and children during a read aloud event are unique and individualized for each dyad, as indicated in the presentation of findings for each dyad in Chapter 4. The research questions focused on finding patterns across the six fathers and within the subgroups of fathers and social fathers. There was not a text selection or interaction *profile* that could be attributed to all participants. As presented in Chapter 4, when the data across all fathers was collapsed, *patterns* emerged in selection and interaction. However, to understand the patterns across the group, the unique patterns of individual fathers and children were also considered in the discussion of group findings.

Text Selection

Fathers' selection. Fathers read with their children at least three times a week using any text they chose. While each dyad was given 12 titles (4 each of expository, narrative, and poetry) for participating in the study, they were encouraged to read whatever they and their child selected including the text provided. As explained in Chapter 3, fathers were asked to keep a Book Reading Log (see Appendix B) listing the book title, the author of the text, and other information regarding their reading sessions. At the end of the study, since most fathers chose not to complete a log, they did not serve as a source of data. Instead, data on selection was collected from the videotaped sessions.

The data on text selection will be discussed first in terms of the type of books chosen by all fathers, with attention to the choice of individual fathers that were different from the group's pattern. This discussion will be followed by the findings of the children since the researcher felt the information would help to understand fathers' interactions. Finally, since

one aspect of the study was to see if there were different patterns between fathers and social fathers, these subgroups will be discussed.

When looking across all dyads, fathers typically read narrative books more than expository or poetry. Overall, fathers read narrative books 41% of the time, compared to expository 32% and poetry 26%. It should be noted that the children and not the fathers made 95% of all the book selections during the study. This is an important revelation as research on book selection suggests that children and adults often choose narrative text over expository and poetry (Barrs & Pidgeon, 1994; Duke & Kays, 1998; Duke, 2003; Phillips & McNaughton, 1990). In study by Yopp and Yopp (2012), the researchers found that when teachers were asked for the title of books recently read to preschool through third-grade students, 77% of the books read were narrative, compared to poetry (14%), and expository/informational text (8%). This shows that even in classrooms, where a variety of genres should be available for students, poetry and expository text are often underutilized. According to feedback on the pre- and post-interviews, fathers enjoyed reading narrative text because they felt the genre was more familiar, easier to find in libraries and bookstores, and they thought that children enjoyed it more than other text types.

As noted previously, while the research sought to determine the patterns of choice across the group of six fathers, individual choices varied, sometimes considerably, and such variation in individual patterns also should be discussed since it affected the group. The narrative text selection of five of the six fathers in the study was fairly even. Adam, Dale, Darren, Max, and Timothy read narrative text on average 41% of the time. However, one father, Winston, was an outlier in the number of narrative text he read with his granddaughter, Sonia. Sonia selected narrative text for 61% of the reading sessions. This is

17% more than Adam who had the next highest percentage of narrative books read (44%).

The high number of narrative text was not surprising to the researcher because Winston stated in the pre-interview that Sonia was going through a reading phase that revolved around Disney books such as *Disney's Tarzan* and *Disney Princess Collection*, as well as books with female characters like *Fancy Nancy*.

The genre of the text selected by two fathers, Darren and Max, was different than the genre selection of the other four. Darren and Max read expository text more than narrative text and poetry. Darren read expository text 44% of the time compared to 36% for narrative text. Max read expository text 38% of the time compared 31% for narrative text. In a study of preschool and kindergarten children and their reading preferences based on genre and familiarity, Robinson, Larsen, Haupt, and Mohlman (1997) found that children chose books from modern and traditional fantasy genre (i.e. *Caps for Sale* and *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*) more than the alphabet-number and informational genre (i.e. *Anno's Alphabet* or *Planting A Rainbow*) Anderson, et al. (2001) found that some parents in the study read expository books to male children 75% of the time compared to female children 25% of the time. However, when looking at children's book choices for recreational reading, Mohr (2006) found that first-grade students overwhelmingly chose nonfiction, informational text regardless of gender. Furthermore, Mohr suggests that this trend may be tied to the information age and the increased ability to gather information through electronic means.

When asked about text selection during the pre- and post-interview, Darren stated that his son, Miles, frequently selected books on cars, trucks, and trains and that often times they would read two or three short books on transportation topics during a reading session. While transcribing videotaped sessions the researcher found that this proved to be the case, as Miles

selected at least two short expository books on trains or trucks at least twice a week. Furthermore, Darren reported that Miles would often receive books on transportation and transportation toys for birthdays and as special treats on the days Miles spent with him. In the case of Max, he attributed his daughter's selection of expository to what she was learning in preschool. Max reported that Beth's reading interests often coincided with the weekly topics they learned about in pre-Kindergarten. At the time of the study, Beth was learning about planets, the solar system, and aquatic life and those topics were reflected in the books they selected from the library and Max read with her. In a study by Anderson, et al. (2001), parents selected expository text slightly more overall and parents chose books based on child's gender, the subject matter of the books, and the children's interests. Furthermore, De Temple (2001) found that children participating in a home-school study performed better than their peers on early literacy measures when they had high home support for literacy. Max stated in his post-interview, that as an adult he enjoys reading expository text more than narrative text so he chose expository text to read to Beth two or three times during the study. These factors resulted in an elevation in the total number of expository books they read during the study.

Poetry remained the lowest percentage of book selection (26%) across all fathers in the study. During pre-interviews, fathers frequently mentioned reading narrative and expository text to their children. While Timothy mentioned he enjoyed reading and writing poetry himself, he only read the genre to Keara 1% more than the other fathers. While there were fewer videotaped sessions with fathers reading poetry, one poetry book in particular was read by all fathers at least twice throughout the study. The book *Please, Baby, Please* by Spike Lee and Tanya Lewis Lee (2006) was a favorite poetry text for children and fathers

alike. At some point in each post-interview, fathers expressed how much children enjoyed the simple, repetitive text and the eye-catching, funny illustration. As stated by Max, “Beth loved, loved, loved *Please, Baby, Please!* Not only did she laugh hysterically whenever I read it, but she read along with me on most of pages and loved the pictures.” Another father, Timothy, commented on the how reading the book was like a performance. “Because of way the book was written, Keara was able to join in with me as I read. We would make funny voices and emphasize certain words to make it more entertaining to read.” In addition, fathers found that the text was conducive to making connections with children and their behaviors when the child was younger. More about connections to this text will be discussed later in the chapter.

Although the connection between book selection and gender of the child was not a focus of the study, data was included in case such information would help the researcher have a greater understanding of selection choices. The genre selection differed between genders for expository and narrative text. Boys selected expository text 9% more often than girls. This stands to reason since Adam and Miles read to boys and, as previously mentioned, read a high percentage of expository. Not surprisingly, girls selected narrative text 6% more often than boys. This corresponds with previously discussed findings, as Winston and his granddaughter Sonia selected the highest percentage of narrative text (61%) compared to all the fathers and children (41%). Finally, boys and girls selected poetry in about equal numbers with 25% and 28% respectively. These preferences are supported in the literature to a degree. For example, Barrs and Pidgeon (1994) found that while girls generally preferred narrative text highlighting family and friendships, boys showed a preference for nonfiction, particularly when topics included sports, science, and history. However, when analyzing the

text types used by mother-child dyads from a Head Start program, Pellegrini, et al. (1990) found that expository text was more often used than narrative text and children's participation was greater when expository text was used. Furthermore, the gender of the child did not have an affect on interactions or text selected. Similarly, Anderson (2004) and Mohr (2006) found that boys and girls selected expository text more often than narrative text, specifically text related to animals. This confirms, that while there are differences for preferred genre between boys and girls, girls also choose expository text but the frequency of preference for expository text is likely due to topics chosen or availability of books.

Fathers and social fathers selection. To further analyze the data, a comparison between the subgroups of *fathers* and *social fathers* was included. For the purpose of this study, *fathers* included Adam, Dale, Darren and Max, and *social fathers* included Timothy and Winston. When looking at the subgroups, fathers read narrative text 37% of the time compared to 21% by social fathers. This is consistent with previously mentioned findings, as two participants, Darren and Max, had a higher percentage of expository text compared to narrative text and were included in the subgroup *fathers*. Conversely, social fathers read narrative text 52% of the time compared to fathers who read narrative text 37% of the time. Once again, this is aligned with findings that Winston, one of the social fathers, read mostly narrative text (61%). Finally, the percentage of poetry books between fathers and social fathers was fairly even at 20% and 27% respectively.

Interactions During Book Reading

Data used to analyze the interaction of fathers with children during interactive book reading sessions were primarily transcripts of reading sessions. Transcripts of book

interactions were coded into 12 major categories for the fathers and 10 for the children.

Interviews provided an additional source of data.

Fathers' Interactions. When data was evaluated for all fathers across all genre types, the largest percentage of interactions came in the form of *Label or Comment About Text and Illustration* with 19% overall. This high percentage can be attributed to several factors. First of all, during post-interviews, fathers indicated that both they and their children made comments about illustrations as they were reading. This was particularly the case with Dale, Timothy, and Winston. These three fathers commented they would label or comment on text and illustrations frequently as a means to increase the child's engagement, call the child's attention to parts of the illustration that were important to the overall understanding of the text, or to increase the child's vocabulary. "Keara liked to look at the pictures and would have lots of questions about what was going in the picture," said Timothy. While reading *Fire Trucks and Rescue Vehicles* by Jean Coppendale (2010), the following interaction took place between Timothy and Keara.

Keara: That ambulance is red and white.

Timothy: Ambulances are different colors. See this one is red. But some are green. And some are orange. But they've got these lights.

So when we're driving you see the lights.

When reading *When You Go To Kindergarten* by Howe and Imershein (1995), Dale made the following comment when looking at an illustration, "See that little boy is cleaning up. He must have been painting because he's cleaning a paintbrush." In addition, Dale

commented on the foreign language used in an illustration in the book *National Geographic: Frogs!* By Elizabeth Carney (2010) while reading with Roman.

Dale: That's a BIG frog! This is the Goliath Frog and they're weighing it. It looks like it's measured in pounds. This frog weighs over 6 pounds! Look at the markings on the scale. They look like Chinese letters. I wonder what those symbols mean?

Finally, when reading, *Please, Baby, Please* Winston provided Sonia with the proper name for a flower in the illustration.

Text: "Don't be so slow, baby baby baby, please. (Illustration shows the baby bending down to pick a dandelion.)

Winston: Remember that dandelion in the front yard of the house? In our front yard? It had the soft things on top and the yellow flower?

Sonia: [shakes head in agreement]

W: That flower is called a dandelion. People like to blow the those and the white parts go flying everywhere."

What is interesting to note about this finding is that expository text typically lends itself to many opportunities for fathers to label or comment about text and illustrations. However, when the interactions of fathers were examined by genre, expository had the lowest percentage of this type of interaction with 13%. That is far lower than the percentage of labeling and commenting in narrative (44%) and poetry (43%). While no conclusive evidence of why this phenomenon occurred was found in this study, research by DeTemple (2001) and Price, van Kleeck, and Huberty (2009) provided some insight. In a study of mother-child talk during book readings of narrative and expository text, DeTemple found that mothers and children talk more and engage in nonimmediate talk more often when reading narrative. However, in a later study by Price, et al. (2009), parents and children focused on expository text longer and had a greater rate of utterances at a higher level of cognitive demand than when reading narrative. It is this researcher's hypothesis that fathers *labeled or commented* about text and illustration more in narrative text, because they spent more time *explaining* unfamiliar concepts in illustrations, text, or vocabulary in expository text.

After the aforementioned category, the categories with the next highest percentage of interactions were *Question About Illustration* and *Acknowledge Child* each with 16%. Fathers Max and Dale had the highest individual interactions of *Question About Illustration* with 23% and 20% respectively. While exploring Max's transcriptions, the researcher found that Max spent much of his reading time asking his daughter Beth questions to assess whether she understood the illustrations, thus expanding her understanding of text, particularly expository text. The following is an example of Max asking Beth questions about illustration to assess her understanding while reading, *Why Does Saturn Have Rings?* by Chris Oxlade (2010).

Max: What is the biggest planet?" What is that one?

Beth: Jupiter.

Max: Jupiter. That's right. Jupiter is the biggest planet. That is the eye on the planet. Do you remember why it has an eye?

Beth: I don't know.

Max: That's a giant storm remember? Jupiter is covered in swirls of red and orange gas and these are giant storms. See, that eye right there is a giant storm that's bigger than Earth.

Likewise, Dale asked his son Roman numerous questions about illustrations while reading the expository text, *National Geographic: Frogs!* by Elizabeth Carney (2009).

Text: "Frogs live all over the world, except Antarctica."

Dale: What is Antarctica?

Roman: It's a continent.

Dale: Hmm...there's Antarctica. Why wouldn't frogs want to live there?

Roman: Only...only penguins and polar bears live there, because it's a really cold place and has snow all over. It's all over covered in snow.

This phenomenon further aligns with the data found when examining reading interactions of fathers across individual genres. When disaggregated, fathers asked questions about illustrations 47% of the time in expository text, 32% in narrative text, and 21% in poetry. Anderson, et al. (2004) supports this finding of different genre patterns. Comparing fathers' and mothers' reading interactions as they read narrative and expository text,

Anderson and colleagues found that fathers asked clarification and other questions more often when reading expository text than narrative text. Furthermore, fathers engaged in more interactions with their children than mothers. This contradicts the findings found in the present study where fathers asked *Questions for Clarification, Prediction, or About Text* 33% when reading expository as compared to 49% when reading narrative.

Since reading sessions were generally completed as a bonding activity between the father and child, it stands to reason that fathers in the present study would acknowledge children frequently as they read. Researchers have found that one of the major reasons parents engaged in shared reading was to establish or strengthen the bond between fathers and their children (Ortiz, Stile, & Brown, 1999). In the present study, Fathers acknowledged children most while reading narrative text (43%), followed by expository (35%), and poetry (22%). While these results suggest that fathers acknowledged their children more while reading narrative text, the researcher contends that this percentage was higher because the total number of narrative texts was greater than the total number of expository texts and poetry, thus increasing the total number for this interaction by fathers. Regardless of genre, fathers overwhelmingly and repeatedly praised children as they read and acknowledged their responses to questions, as well as their comments about text or illustrations. Examples of praise included, “You’re right!” “Great job!” and “Yay!” Praise during book reading is important because it encourages children to actively participate and pay attention (Fagan & Hayden, 1988; Hammett, van Kleeck, & Huberty, 2003). In addition, Morrow and Smith (1990) found that praise was used more often in one-on-one and small group settings in classrooms.

As stated in Chapter 3, the categories of *Question for Clarification, Prediction, or About Text* and *Explanation of Illustration, Text, and Vocabulary* were a combination of multiple codes into a final category due to a small percentage as individual codes. These two codes, one related to questions and the other explanation, each accounted for 11% of the overall interactions across all genres. When the two categories were divided by genre, the highest percentage of these codes was found in narrative text with 49% (Questions) and 45% (Explanation). While the next highest percentage of these two categories was observed in expository text, there is a difference between the two. *Question for Clarification, Prediction, or About Text* was observed 33% of the time in expository text, compared to 43% of the time for *Explanation of Illustration, Text or Vocabulary*. Because expository text is often filled with unfamiliar concepts and vocabulary presented in text and/or illustrations, it makes sense that fathers would have to do more explanation when interacting with a child during expository text. An example of the need for explanation was present when Adam read *Incredible Insects* by Zoe Barnes (2009) and explained an unknown term, *exoskeleton*, to his son Michael.

Text: “All insects have a hard covering called an exoskeleton. This protects their soft insides.”

Adam: If you had an exoskeleton, it would protect your soft insides. But you don’t have an exoskeleton, you have a skeleton and muscles and tendons and all that.

Also worth noting is the fact that the explanation of illustration, text, or vocabulary is a higher-order skill that fathers utilized to help children understand text. Darren provided a prime example of explanation as a method to help his son Miles understand the text when reading *Let's Build* (2008).

Text: "The mighty cement mixer dumps a load of cement on the road. The tough road roller gets to work leveling the cement. The concrete road has to be smooth for the cars to drive on. Once the cement is smooth and dry, the construction workers will go back to work. When the highway is done, people will be able to travel far and wide on it. Good work everyone!"

Miles: What's that truck doing right there? [pointing to the picture]

Darren: That truck is carrying the bulldozer away because the work is done.

Miles: Oh, yeah?

Darren: Yep. It's going to a new job.

Miles: It's going to take it to a different construction site?

Darren: Yep. It's going to take it to another site.

Miles: Ok.

In terms of poetry, the two most frequently occurring categories of interaction were *Question for Clarification, Prediction, or About Text* (18%) and *Explanation of Illustration, Text, or Vocabulary* (12%). In numerous research studies by Catherine Snow and colleagues

the researchers found that (Beals & Snow, 1994; DeTemple & Snow, 2003; Dickinson & Snow, 1987; Tabors, Snow, & Dickinson, 2001; Weizman & Snow, 2001) increased explanatory talk was highly correlated to children's higher scores on vocabulary and listening comprehension assessments. Furthermore, parents who give quick explanations for word meanings and make connections between the word and the child's experiences, help support for child's understanding of words. Biemiller and Boote (2006) examined kindergarten through second grade students and their word learning development when teachers read narrative text. When teachers used repeated readings combined with word explanations to teach new vocabulary, students retained word meanings 10% more often than when only repeated readings were used (12%) resulting in a 22% total vocabulary gain. Adam displays this type of interaction when reading the book in poetry format, *I Love You As Big As the World* by David Van Buren (2008).

Text: "I love you as long as the days. I love you as high as the mountaintop. I love you in so many ways! I love you as strong as the wind. I love you as soft as the dew."

Michael: What's dew?

Adam: It's like the moisture that builds up on the ground.

Especially in the morning.

The next highest interaction total across all fathers and genres was *Connection to Text or Illustration* with 8%. While this interaction category was only 8% across all genres, it was the most frequently occurring category of interaction when reading poetry (44%). When interviewing the fathers, all mentioned how much their children enjoyed the poetry book *Please, Baby, Please* by Spike Lee and Tanya Lewis Lee (2006). Using simple text such as,

“Go back to bed, baby, please, baby, please/ Not on your HEAD, baby baby baby, please!”

the book follows the pleas of a mother as she tries to restrain the energy of a toddler. Each colorfully illustrated two-page spread captures the hourly adventures of the toddler and the repetitious refrain of the parents trying to correct the toddler’s behavior. When viewing videotaped sessions of fathers reading this book, the researcher noticed numerous examples of fathers and children making connections between the book and the child’s behaviors when they were younger. Examples of Winston making connections while reading with Sonia and Darren reading with Miles are presented on the page as well as the next.

Text: “Keep off the wall, baby baby, please, baby.”

Sonia: Bad girl!

Winston: Good thing you never did that.

Sonia: I’ve never done that.

Winston: No, you haven’t.

Text: “You share that ball, please, baby baby baby.”

Winston: Do you share at school? Are you getting better at that now?

Sonia: Um, hm.

Darren also made connections to *Please, Baby, Please* when reading with Miles.

Text: “*Please, Baby, Please* by Spike Lee and Tonya Lewis Lee.

Miles: Is that a girl baby?

Darren: Yep.

Text: “Illustrated by Kadir Nelson. *Please, Baby, Please*. Go back to bed, baby, please, baby, please.”

Darren: That’s like when you were little. You were always up and your mom was trying to sleep. You were crying and making noise.

Miles: Oh, yeah? Did I love playing with my toys when it was in...3 o’clock in the morning?

Darren: You wanted toys or you were crying...it was always something.

When making connections to books, Beck and McKeown (2001) found that children often rely on personal experiences to understand text and illustrations. In order to help children interpret and understand illustrations, Schickedanz and Collins (2012) encourage adults to fully explain illustrations, prompt the use of background information, and reread or refer to important text. Evidence of this can be seen in the above interaction when Darren explains what is happening in the illustration and relates it to Miles’ behavior when he was a baby to help assure understanding.

The six remaining categories contributed 4% or less to the percentage of total interactions made. *Response to Child's Question, Prompt, Spontaneous Comment About Text or Illustration*, and *Correction of Child's Utterance* each accounted for 4% of the interaction total; while *Expansion of Child's Utterance* and *Management of Behavior*, contributed 2% each. However, when these codes are divided by genre, some interesting findings emerged. While reading expository text, fathers responded to children's questions more than when they read narrative or expository text. For example, when reading *Incredible Insects* by Zoe Barnes (2009), Roman asked Dale "Is the beetle's thorax like my stomach?" Dale's response was, "It's kind of like your stomach. But not quite." This was a typical short response to children's questions. In addition, fathers made more spontaneous comments about text or illustrations when reading expository text. Fathers were observed making more spontaneous comments such as, "Wow!" "That's amazing!" and "How cool is that!" when reading expository text.

Although *Prompt* and *Correction of Child's Utterance* accounted for a very small percentage of the total number of interactions, prompts were more common in narrative text than in expository text or poetry. Through further analysis, many of the prompts and corrections came as fathers read one particular narrative, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (1994). The text of this book includes repetitive phrases, the days of the week, and simple illustrations of familiar food items. Because of its repeated phrases and format,

fathers had multiple opportunities to prompt children as to what would happen next in the text. An example of this can be found in the following interactions between Timothy and Keara.

Timothy: What comes after Wednesday? What day comes after Wednesday? Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday...

Keara: Friday.

Timothy: Thursday. That's the day I pick you up from school. On Thursday.

Text: "On Thursday, he ate through four strawberries, but he was still hungry."

Timothy: What comes after Thursday?

Keara: He ate peaches.

Timothy: What comes after Thursday? Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday...

Keara: Friday.

Conversely, providing more opportunities to respond to prompts also increased the number of *Corrections to Child's Utterance* interactions fathers made when children answered. For instance, when reading *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* by Rachel Isadora (2007), Winston corrects Sonia's answer when counting the number of princesses.

Text: "The soldier put on his cloak and followed. The youngest princess thought she heard someone following them. 'Don't be silly. There is no one there.' said the eldest."

Sonia: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight.

Winston: Hmm...Eight of them? How many were there all together though?

Sonia: Eight.

Winston: Remember [turning to the cover of the book]?

Sonia: Eight dancing...

Winston: Not eight. Twelve.

Sonia: Yeah. Twelve dancing princesses.

The final two categories, *Expansion of Child's Utterance* and *Management of Behavior* each accounted for 2% of the interaction total. Because reading sessions were one-on-one interactions between fathers and children, it is reasonable that there were few instances where fathers had to manage behavior. Fathers and children selected books that were interesting to the child and provided ample opportunities for both to interact on many levels, thus reducing the likelihood that children would be disinterested or misbehave during reading session.

Fathers and social fathers interactions. One goal of the study was to examine whether there were interaction differences between fathers and social fathers. The subgroup of *Fathers* included four fathers: Adam, Dale, Darren, and Max. The subgroup of *Social Fathers* included two fathers: Timothy and Winston. The researcher hypothesized that there would be little difference between the two groups because of the small sample size of the study and the similarity of reading interactions across all fathers. In 10 of the 12 interaction categories this was true. There was very little variance between fathers and social fathers in the categories of *Question About Illustration; Acknowledge Child; Explanation of Illustration, Text, or Vocabulary; Connection to Text or Illustration; Prompt; Spontaneous Comment About Text or Illustration; Correction of Child's Utterance; Response to Child's Question; Management of Behavior; and Expansion of Child's Utterance*. In these categories, the percent difference between the interactions of the fathers and social fathers ranged from 1% to 4%. However, in the categories of *Label or Comment About Text or Illustration* and *Question for Clarification, Prediction, or About Text* the difference was much greater. When reading all genres, social fathers interacted through labeling and commenting about text or illustrations 24% of the time compared to fathers (15%). This discrepancy arose due to the elevated use of labels and comments by the two social fathers, Timothy and Winston (23%), compared to the father subgroup (16%). The fact that the social fathers read more narrative text (52%) compared to fathers (37%), and *Label or Comments About Text or Illustration* had the highest percentage in narrative text with 44%, could also explain why the two social fathers engaged in this interaction so much more than the fathers.

The second difference in interactions between fathers and social fathers was in the category of *Question for Clarification, Prediction, or About Text*. Fathers accounted for 8%

of the interaction in the category, compared to 15% by social fathers. This difference can be traced by to one particular social father, Winston. As previously mentioned, Winston's contribution to the overall total of participants engaging in interactions under the category of *Question for Clarification, Prediction, or About Text* was 21% compared to 6%-13% for all other participants. The large number of clarification questions he asked his granddaughter, Sonia, as they read *Tarzan*, explained this finding. In turn, this also affected the data when this interaction was analyzed by individual genres. Comparatively, 49% of the interactions of *Question for Clarification, Prediction, or About Text* occurred in narrative text, in contrast to 33% in expository and 18% in poetry. This illustrates the fact that data can be skewed when there is a small sample size and one participant engages in a behavior overwhelmingly more frequently than other participants.

Summary

The book selection and interactions of father-child dyads in this study were individual in nature. Fathers and children had varying interests across genres and topics, and book selection sometimes revolved around what books were available before the reading session began. While dyads selected narrative books more often than expository text and poetry, there was no established profile for book or genre selection that could be attributed to all fathers. Children primarily selected the text and choices were based on their interests.

Despite the fact that the pre-study book selection focus group was adamant about utilizing books with characters that reflected their culture and experiences, the only book that fathers repeatedly read to their children with these characteristics was *Please, Baby, Please*. Although three fathers read the other titles with African American characters, *Just The Two of Us*, *I Love My Hair!*, and *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* during the study, these titles

were only read once by those fathers. Fathers made no mention of the ethnicity of the characters in the books they read. Hudson (1997) advocates that African American parents and teachers should seek books that contain positive images of African American people and leave a lasting impression. In addition, books should be enjoyable and include meaningful stories that promote African American values and lifestyles. While the researcher believed that it was important to provide the father-child dyads with books with characters that reflected their ethnicity, none of the fathers commented that it was a factor when selecting books for their children.

The patterns of interaction across all genres between fathers and social fathers was fairly consistent with *Label and Comment About Text or Illustrations*, *Questions About Illustration*, and *Acknowledge Child* in the top three for both subgroups. However, depending on the dyad or the text selected, the interactions varied. All fathers had high percentages of interactions in the categories of *Label and Comment About Text or Illustrations*, and *Questions About Illustration*, however this was different depending on the genre. Fathers labeled or commented more often when reading narrative text, but asked questions about illustrations more often with expository text. This continues to support the claim that dyads' selection and interactions were unique and individual in reading sessions.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. The first limitation was the sample. The sample size was small with only six participants and all participants were African American males. While fathers varied in their individual exposure and experiences growing up, all fathers reported that they already read with their child before they participated in the study and that their children had access to books in the home library. This may have affected the

types of interactions fathers engaged in with their children as well as the books children selected to read during the sessions. Had fathers been unfamiliar with reading to children, or only had access to the books provided by the researcher, the interactions and books selected may have been different. In addition, the fathers were highly educated and read themselves, thus suggesting that they had more information about the value of reading to their child and the educational benefits that often result from these interactions. This, too, may have affected selection and interactions.

Secondly, some dyads were uncomfortable with videotaping the book reading sessions. On several occasions, two fathers, Dale and Darren, voiced concerns about how well they were doing during sessions and if the interactions were what “(the researcher) was looking for.” While the researcher believes that the two fathers became more comfortable reading to their children as time progressed based on the video transcriptions, the notion that the researcher was “looking for” specific behaviors may have altered how they traditionally read during these sessions.

Implications for Research

This research is just the initial step in understanding the book reading interactions of African American fathers/social fathers and their children. While research has been conducted with Caucasian fathers, Hispanic fathers, and participants of multiple ethnic groups, there is very little research specifically addressing the reading interactions of African American fathers. It would be beneficial to compare this research with fathers/social from other racial populations to see if there significant differences between fathers based on culture or race. As the demographics of African American families continue to change, more research will need to be conducted with social fathers as participants. Grandfathers,

stepfathers, uncles, and other family members are increasingly raising children in African American communities, therefore research on reading interactions that include all fathers in children's lives will need to reflect that reality. While this study showed little difference in most interactions between fathers and social fathers, a larger study that includes more social fathers may yield different results.

Selection

In order to have interactive book reading sessions that are engaging to children, selecting books that include quality pictures, center on well-written text, and are based on children's interests is key. Participants in this study were given 12 titles to use during reading sessions, but also were encouraged to read any books they deemed appropriate or interesting to their child. In studies by Pellegrini, et al. (1995) and Price, van Kleeck, Huberty (2009) researchers provided parent-child dyads with limited and specific narrative and expository titles to read during the study. Books were analyzed for similar structure, equivalent sentence length, vocabulary diversity, and familiarity of expository topics. Taking this approach allowed those researchers to compare interactions more easily and be familiar with all the books in the study. In the present study, books were not analyzed for any of the above-mentioned criteria. This led to the researcher's lack of familiarity with all the books the dyads read, as well as a variation in the number of books from each category that were analyzed. Although standardization of the book selection may reduce the engagement of some students involved in a future research similar to the present study, it would standardize the analysis of data.

Interactions

While this study focused on a small sample size, it would be helpful to have a larger sample to determine if the patterns of interactions differ when more dyads are involved. The research advantage of this sample was that all fathers were already reading to children before the study began. Bedtime reading routines and a variety of reading materials were already established in each home and were readily available for children at all times. For future research, it would be valuable to replicate the present study with fathers with less experience reading to their children or with children that were not being read to on a regular basis. In addition, a sample that included fathers with varying levels of education would more reflect the demographics of the current U. S. population. This could help determine if fathers involved in fewer interactive reading sessions would have the same interaction pattern as fathers that participated in more sessions.

Last of all, a study that focused entirely on the interactions of children would benefit the research community. While studies have been done on the interaction patterns of adult caregivers, less research has been done on how children interact with parents as they read together. Although children's interactions are partly based on the initial interaction presented by the adult, it would interesting to note if children had more control over the direction of the interactions than found in the present study.

Implications for Practice

Traditionally, there is limited research examining fathers' involvement in their on children's life. Mikelson (2008) found that research is limited because there are few longitudinal studies on fathers' involvement, mothers tend to underestimate the amount of fathers involvement, and fathers' response rates in researcher studies tend to be lower than

mothers' responses. However, Saracho and Spodek (2008) affirm that fathers are taking a more active role in childrearing due to increasing divorce rates, increasing numbers of women in the work force, and increasing non-custodial or non-parental care of children. Lastly, data collected from the National Center for Educational Statistics (1997) contend that children perform better in school, have higher levels of economic achievement, have higher psychological well being when fathers actively participate in their lives.

The fathers/social fathers in the present study demonstrated a high level of paternal involvement with children. They managed their child's behaviors, attended to their child's needs, and supported their children's home and school-related activities while being affectionate and supporting children's emotional development. In addition, the fathers/social fathers were eager to be involved in early literacy practices with their children and understood the impact these activities could have on their child's future academic success.

Educators, and lay people alike, must realize that many fathers *are* involved with their child's literacy earning and upbringing. Despite the increase in non-residential fathers or social fathers helping raise children, countless fathers make spending time with their children a priority, regardless of if they are residential fathers, non-residential fathers, or social fathers helping raise children. Mothers and educators need to acknowledge and affirm fathers that are involved, and create programs that encourage non-involved fathers to take part. Instead of trying to teach fathers "the right way to read to children," these programs should support fathers' personal goals for reading with their children, as well as provide fathers with opportunities to explore literacy in all genres through social interactions, children's interests, activities that promote literacy development for future school success.

Finally, fathers/social fathers understand that reading can open a world of possibilities for their children. In the words of social father Timothy, during his preinterview:

“My job is to expose her to as many types of literature and literacy activities as I can. That is vitally important to a child. For them to be able to explore themselves; things they know nothing about. They can crack a book open and begin to explore different things. When you read a lot, you learn a lot. You’re able to understand that your world isn’t just confined to where you were born, how you were raised, or about happens just in your house. The world is a great big place. The more you read, the more you can conceptualize what your dreams are, what your visions are, and what your goals are. You can envision yourself actually doing it and that creates dreams. I think it’s important for a child to dream big. I’m hoping that will be my impact on Keara.”

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APPENDIX A

Children's Books Given To Participants

| Title | Author | Genre |
|--|-----------------------|------------|
| Toppers: Rainforest Animals | None | Expository |
| Incredible Insects | Barnes, Z. | Expository |
| Frogs! | Carney, E. | Expository |
| Fire Trucks and Rescue Vehicles | Coppendale, J. | Expository |
| Dora the Explorer: First Day of School | Aguiree, J. | Narrative |
| The Very Hungry Caterpillar | Carle, E. | Narrative |
| Twelve Dancing Princesses | Isadora, R. | Narrative |
| I Love My Hair! | Tarpley, N. | Narrative |
| Please, Baby, Please | Lee, S., & Lee, T. L. | Poetry |
| Shades of Black: A Celebration of Our Children | Pickney, S. L. | Poetry |
| Just The Two of Us | Smith, Will | Poetry |
| I Love You As Big As the World | Van Buren, D. | Poetry |

APPENDIX B
Book Reading Log

Participants: _____

Location: _____ Date: _____

Book Title: _____

Author: _____ Publication Date: _____

Book Selected By: Father/Social Father _____ Child _____

Have you read this book with your child before? Yes _____ No _____

Source for book: Home _____ School/Public Library _____
 Research Study _____

APPENDIX C

Book Reading Interactions of Fathers

| Interaction | Definition | Examples |
|---|--|---|
| Label or comment about text or illustration (L) | Father provides a label or description of a picture or comments on the illustration or text. | F: That's a bucket truck. F: That's a shorthorn grasshopper. It has pretty colors. |
| Question about illustration (H) | Father questions or focuses on an aspect of the illustration. | F: See all the princesses' shoes and dresses? F: Which princess do you think is the oldest. |
| Acknowledge Child (L) | Father comments on what the child has said or praises the interaction. | C: That looks like a big cow. F: You're right. That is a big cow. Good job! |
| Question for clarification, prediction, or about text (H) | Father asks child to clarify what they have said about a text or illustration; to predict what may happen next based on the text or illustration; to provide information directly related to an event in the text or illustration. | F: You think Tarzan wanted to hurt those people Why do you think that? F: What do you think will happen after the caterpillar eats all that food? F: Look at all those princesses. How many were there again? |
| Explanation of illustration, text, or vocabulary (H) | Father explains or expands upon the content of the illustration; gives additional information about content of the text; or explains the meaning of a word or phrase. | F: That chart shows that 90% of the world's creatures are insects and 10% are other animals. F: Many insects taste with their feet. That would be like walking around tasting ice cream with your feet. F: 'Dew' is the moisture that builds up on the ground. Especially in the morning. |
| Connection to text or illustration (H) | Father makes a personal, literature, or world connection to the text or illustration. | F: (referring to an illustration of a baby waking up early in the morning) That's like when you were little. You were always up and your mom was trying to sleep. You were crying and making noise. F: Remember when we got you a dump truck like? |
| Response to child's question (L) | Father responds to child's question about text or illustration. | C: Why is that caterpillar eating all that food? F: Caterpillars eat a lot of food before they go into their cocoon. |

APPENDIX C (cont.)

Book Reading Interactions of Fathers

| Interaction | Definition | Examples |
|--|--|---|
| Prompt (L) | Father produces a 'fill-in-the-blank' statement, intonational cues, or phonemic/phonetic cues to encourage a child to respond. | F: "Not on your..." C: Head F: "Baby, baby, baby, please!" |
| Spontaneous comment about text or illustration (L) * | Father offers a spontaneous comment in reaction to the text or illustration. | F: Wow! Look at the size of that frog! F: Cool! |
| Correction of child's utterance (L) | Father indicates that the child's comment or answer to a question is incorrect. | F: No. Thursday, not Friday, comes after Wednesday. F: Remember there weren't eight princesses, there were twelve. |
| Expansion of child's utterance (H) | Father provides additional information by building upon the child's utterance. | C: I didn't do that when I was young right? F: No. never wrote on the walls. |
| Management of behavior (L) * | Father attends to child's behavior. | F: Hey! Are you listening to the book? I'm going to ask you a question later to make sure. |

Modified from *Maternal Communicative Acts and Children's Communicative Acts* by Hammer, Nimmo, Cohen, Draheim & Johnson (2005) and *Categories for coding children's verbal behaviors* by Morrow & Smith (1990) (denoted by *).

APPENDIX D

Book Reading Interactions of Children

| Interaction | Definition | Examples |
|--|---|---|
| Respond to father's question about text or illustration. | Child provides an answer to the father's question. | F: What planet is that? C: That's Jupiter. |
| Label or comment about text | Child provides a label or comment on the text. | C: That baby doesn't want to leave the playground. She's yelling and screaming. |
| Label or comment about illustration. | Child provides a description of the picture or comments on what happened in the illustration. | C: That princess has the prettiest dress. It has rainbow colors in it. |
| Spontaneous comment about text or illustration. * | Child offers a spontaneous comment in reaction to the text or illustration. | C: Wow! C: Oops! C: I can't see. |
| Imitate father | Child repeats part or all of the father's previous utterance. | F: "Good morning teacher! Buenos Dias maestra!" C: Buenos Dias maestra! |
| Respond to father's prompt | Child responds to a father's prompt for an answer. | F: "On Friday, he ate through...?" C: Five oranges. F: "But...?" C: He was still hungry. |
| Question about text | Child asks for information about the text. | C: Why was the little girl sad and crying? |
| Connection to text or illustration | Child makes a personal, literature, or world connection to the text or illustration. | (referring to an illustration of a baby eating noodles and peas) C: I had noodles when we went to Noodles and Company, remember? F: Yeah, Bud. I do. C: And I always eat me peas. F: You do not! I stopped making them for you because you wouldn't eat them. C: Oh, yeah? Ok. |
| Question about illustration | Child asks for information related to the illustration. | C: Is that a poisonous frog (pointing to the illustration)? |
| Call attention to text or illustration | Child calls fathers' attention to an aspect of the text or illustration. | C: Hey! That's letter 'B' like in my name! |

Modified from *Maternal Communicative Acts and Children's Communicative Acts* by Hammer, Nimmo, Cohen, Draheim & Johnson (2005) and *Categories for coding children's verbal behaviors* by Morrow & Smith (1990) (denoted by *).

APPENDIX E

Preresearch Literacy Profile Questions

Father's Name and Age: _____

Child's Name, Age, and Gender: _____

Current Employment: _____

Tell me a story about your experience(s) with reading as a child.

Did your parents read to or with you when you were growing up? If so:

- a. How many times a week? _____
- b. Who selected the reading materials? Parents _____ Child _____
- c. How long did a typical reading session last? _____ min.

What did your parents tell you about learning to read?

Tell me about books, magazines, newspapers, or other reading materials that you had at your house while growing up.

Tell me about your educational experiences

What did you think about school?

Tell me about your memories of learning to read (Who played a role in your learning to read? When did you learn to read?)

What kinds of materials do you remember reading at school?

What kinds of materials did you read during religious services?

Tell me about your child's experiences with books, magazines, newspapers, or other reading materials.

Do you read with your child now?

- d. How many times a week? _____
- e. Who selects the book(s)? Father/Social Father _____ Child _____
- f. How long does a typical reading session last? _____ min.

What types of reading materials are available in your home and family?

What type of material does your child like you to read to them?

What type of material do you like to read with your child?

How do you select the materials you read with your child?

Do you consider your child's gender when you select reading material?

Where, and at what time, do you typically read with your child?

Do you have an established place where your child's books can be found at your house?

Where do you get the books you read with your child?

Library _____ School Library _____ Public Library _____

Does your child ever ask you to reread things you've already read to them?

What kinds of materials do you read during religious services?

What do you tell your child about learning to read?

Tell me a story about a time when you and your child enjoyed reading together.

Modified from *Questions for Identifying Family Culture of Literacy* by Johnson (2010).

APPENDIX F

Post-Research Literacy Profile Questions

Father's Name and Age: _____

Child's Name, Age, and Gender: _____

Current Employment: _____

Tell me a story about a time when you and your child enjoyed reading together during this project.

Did you enjoy participating in this project? What aspects of the project did you like?

Do you have any advice for me that would improve this project if I were to conduct it with other dads?

Since this project began, what, if anything, have you changed when you read with your child?

What did your child like you to read to them during this project?

Did your child ever ask you to reread materials you already read to them?

What reading material did you like to read with your child during this project?

Did you consider your child's gender when you selected books to read?

Who selected the reading material? Adult _____ Child _____

Where did you get the books you read with your child?

Home _____ School Library _____ Public Library _____

Where, and at what time, did you typically read with your child?

How many times a week did you read? _____

How long did a typical reading session last? _____ min.

Do you have an established place at your house where your child's books or other reading materials can be found?

Is there anything more you'd like to tell me about this experience or reading with your child in general?

Modified from *Questions for Identifying Family Culture of Literacy* by Johnson (2010).